

THE FRIENDS OF ST. COLMAN'S CATHEDRAL PRESS RELEASE

30TH JULY 2006

Contrary to what is asserted in the letter from Bishop Magee which was read at all Mass in the Diocese 29th/30th July 2006, the Friends once again would point out that the Sanctuary of Cobh Cathedral is in complete conformity with the present liturgical norms promulgated in the Institutio Generalis Romani Missalis. Sufficient expert advice has been provided to prove this point. Also we regard it as a gross misrepresentation to suggest that the people of Cobh have been unable fully, actively and consciously to participate in the Church's Liturgy.

The letter also mentions the property rites guaranteed to Religious Denominations by Bunreacht na hEireann. We believe this to be irrelevant in the context of An Bord Pleanála's decision and would point out that St. Colman's Cathedral has never been owned by a religious denomination. The cathedral is owned by a secular trust established in Irish Law which lacks all ecclesiastical and denominational character i.e. The Trustees of St. Colman's Cathedral. The present trustees are Mr. Tom Cavanagh of Fermoy, Fr. Tim Fouhy and Bishop John Magee.

We would also point out that were constitutional difficulties to have arisen in relation to An Bord Pleanála's decision the Trustees have chosen not to test these in the normal way by appealing that decision to the High Court.

The Friends wish to confirm they represent the overall majority of the faithful, and at no time have they been consulted in relation to anything about their Cathedral. Indeed as late as last April Bishop John Magee indicated that he would not meet with the Friends except under conditions prejudicial to their position.

The bishop's letter claims that the proposed alterations to the interior of the Cathedral were promoted by the Diocesan Authorities. The Friends would respectfully point out that the proposals for the interior of the Cathedral were promoted by the Trustees of St. Colman's Cathedral i.e. Mr. Cavanagh, Fr. Fouhy and Bishop Magee.

We are aware the Bishop raises the question of the temporary altar at St. Colman's and the need to replace it with a more fitting one. Whereas the Friends in principle would not be opposed to such a move, but are not however in a position to give it their whole hearted support until such time as they have been able to see the plans and drawings for such a proposal and to consult with their legal, liturgical and conservational advisors about them.

The Friends wish to state that they will continue to monitor the situation at St. Colman's Cathedral with great vigilance and any further applications to Cobh Town Council will be closely examined and appropriate action taken in there regard.

We are also aware that an attempt may be made surreptitiously to introduce a series of alterations to the Cathedral by means of a Declaration. The Friends wish to state that they will be in contact with the relevant planning authority and their legal advisors on this matter.

Finally regarding "some members of the faithful" finding "it difficult to understand why it is necessary to continue with the process for the internal re-ordering of St. Colman's", most members of the faithful in Cobh find it difficult to understand why the re-ordering was ever proposed in the first place and not attempt has been made convincingly to justify it.

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