



Diocese of Plymouth **From the Office of the Bishop**

PRESS RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 11AM ON 27 April, 2022

Pope Francis appoints Bishop Mark O’Toole as new Archbishop of Cardiff

Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Mark O’Toole as Archbishop-elect of Cardiff and Bishop-elect of Menevia.

Bishop Mark O’Toole has been Bishop of Plymouth since his appointment in 2013. Previously, he was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Westminster in 1990 and served as private secretary to Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor between 2002-2008, before his appointment as the rector of Allen Hall seminary in 2008.

Archbishop-elect O’Toole will become the eighth archbishop of Cardiff in succession to Archbishop George Stack, who has been Archbishop of Cardiff since 2011. The installation will take place in Cardiff Cathedral on 20 June, the feast day of Welsh martyrs Saints Julius and Aaron.

On hearing of his appointment, Archbishop-elect O’Toole said:

“I am grateful and humbled by the trust that the Holy Father has placed in me. I face the task ahead both with excitement and a certain trepidation, conscious of my own weaknesses. Throughout my life I have learnt to trust the Lord’s will more deeply, and in these days of Eastertide especially, I have taken much comfort from Jesus’ words to His first Apostles, “Do not be afraid. I go before you...” It is with this deep sense that the Lord goes before all of us in this new mission, that I fully embrace this new calling in my life.

“I express my heartfelt gratitude to all in the Diocese of Plymouth. You have taught me what it is to be a bishop. I will leave with many happy memories, and with sadness, too, in saying farewell to good friends. Thank you for the love you have shown me these past eight years. It strengthens me as I face this new opportunity, and I am sure you will be praying for me.

“I know, too, that I can count on the cooperation and prayer of the Priests, Deacons, Religious, and Lay Faithful of the Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Diocese of Menevia. I look forward to meeting you all and, in time, to us getting to know one another. I am delighted that Archbishop George will be staying in the area, and I know I can count on his support and wise advice. I look forward to working with fellow Christians, with people of other faiths, and with all people of goodwill, for the good of all in our local communities.

“Wales and Herefordshire are new territory for me, having only visited for holidays and retreats. I am struck by the rich history and dramatic geography of the two dioceses, with their vibrant multicultural cities, rural valleys, and beautiful coastlines, their agrarian and modern technological innovation and diversity. I am grateful for the roots we share in our rich Celtic culture. I hope it gives us a certain fellow-feeling for one another. I know what it means to be uprooted, to make a home in a new and different land, and it will be good to get to know our migrant brothers and sisters. I look forward, too, to steeping myself in the historical reality and diverse experience of the two Dioceses, as we work more closely together. I recognise that this will take time. As one of our Welsh sayings puts it, “*Rhaid cropian cyn cerdded* (You must crawl before walking).”

“I have much to learn and I know I can count on your patience and understanding. I ask especially for your prayers. When I first became bishop, I chose the motto, “Into your hands, Lord”. It is a prayer I have had cause to make many times in recent days. It is a prayer that I ask us all in Cardiff and Menevia, to make together today, and in the weeks and months ahead. For it is in the Lord, as His missionary disciples, that we find our deepest identity. It is for Him that we set out afresh, to deepen our love of Him, and to bring others to Him. I commend myself, and all of us, to Mary, Immaculately Conceived, that she light the way for us to Her Son; we seek also, the intercession of St Joseph, St David, and all our local patron Saints, in making this new pilgrimage together.”

Archbishop George Stack said:

“I warmly welcome the appointment of Archbishop – Elect Mark O’Toole to the 8th Archbishop of Cardiff and the 4th Bishop of Menevia ‘in persona Episcopi’. This provision has been made by the Holy See maintaining the identity, juridical reality, history and pastoral life of each diocese.

“Archbishop-Elect Mark will bring great gifts to this new ministry. The peoples of each diocese will be blessed by his experience as Bishop of Plymouth. His pastoral, theological and administrative skills will be of great benefit to us all. His national responsibilities as Chair of the Department of Evangelisation and Discipleship in the Bishops Conference of England and Wales have been recognised by the Holy See in his membership of the International Council for Catechesis. His Celtic heritage will resonate with the Catholic faithful in Wales and in the wider community of his new home. Ad Multos Annos!”

Cardinal Nichols said:

“Today’s news of the appointment of Bishop Mark O’Toole as Metropolitan Archbishop of Cardiff and Bishop of Menevia, *in persona Episcopi*, is most welcome. I offer Bishop Mark my fullest support and fervent prayers as he prepares to take on this new role. I am sure that the Catholic community throughout Wales will welcome him warmly, as will leaders of other churches there and those of civic society. St David and all saints of Wales, pray for him.”