

**Opening Commentary by Fr.Paul Clayton-Lea at the installation of
Mons.Eamon Martin as co-Adjutor Archbishop of Armagh, St.Patrick's
Cathedral Armagh. 3.00pm April 21st 2013.**

Introduction

Dear friends, we now have an opportunity in these final minutes before our ceremony begins this afternoon to reflect and gather our thoughts as we prepare to greet and celebrate a most joyful occasion in the history of our diocese, the Episcopal ordination of Mons.Eamon Martin on Good Sheperd Sunday here in the beautiful surroundings of St.Patrick's cathedral. A cathedral built on the hilltop indelibly marked by St.Patrick's act of compassion in bringing a fawn and its mother to refuge here when the frightened animals had been disturbed as Patrick's first stone church was being built on Sally Hill in the year 445. In its present form this Cathedral of St.Patrick with the distinctive twin spires was designed by JJ McCarthy of Dublin who also as it happened designed St.Eugene's Cathedral in Derry so familiar to Monsignor Martin and those welcome visitors from Derry here present today. So our new archbishop should feel at ease among somewhat familiar surroundings but more importantly perhaps surrounded by the prayers and good wishes of all of us gathered here as well as those who are thinking of him and praying for him beyond the walls of this cathedral. A warm welcome also to listeners and viewers via webcam and internet and other broadcast media.

Last night in the cathedral Monsignor Eamon's new Episcopal ring symbolising his betrothal to the church; his mitre the formal head dress of authority with its origins in biblical times, and the crozier shaped like a shepherds crook first used as a religious symbol in ancient Egypt, were all blessed in preparation for presentation to the new bishop today. There was a period of prayer and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament that concluded with the ceremony of Benediction reminding us of the central place of the Eucharist in the life of the new archbishop's ministry as he seeks to serve and nourish God's people on their journey of faith.

The Rite of Ordination

As Cardinal Brady mentions in the introductory reflection in our Mass booklet, the ceremony of anointing and consecration we are about to witness today is one which is almost exactly the same as that first described 1800 years ago by St. Hippolytus of Rome. The ordination rite begins with the invocation of the Holy Spirit followed by the presentation of the bishop-elect. And after the reading of the Apostolic Letter from the Holy See with its mandate of authority for the new bishop, the consent of the people is gained by the acclamation we all make; 'Thanks be to God.'

In his examination Cardinal Brady will invite Monsignor Eamon to promise a life-long commitment to faithfulness, orthodoxy, unity and pastoral care of God's people through a prayerful, kind and compassionate ministry. As the bishop elect confirms his promise he then seeks the help of God and the saints of the church in carrying out his mission. The moment of ordination then arrives with the laying on of hands by Cardinal Brady and his brother bishops indicating the new bishop's empowerment in pastoral authority and his reception into the college of bishops. The book of the gospels, the prayer of consecration and the anointing with oil of Chrism symbolises the role of God's Word and God's Spirit as the new bishop deepens his participation in the high priesthood of Christ. Then finally he is invested with the symbols of his ministry the ring, mitre and crozier and invited by Cardinal Brady to faithfully love, protect and watch over those now placed in his pastoral care. The rite ends as the new bishop takes his place at the chair beside the cathedra and shares the sign of peace with all.

It's at this point that the new chosen motto of Archbishop Eamon 'Cantate, Cantum, Novum, 'springs to life in McDonagh's anthem 'Sing a new song to the Lord.' This motto which reflects Monsignor Eamon's gift for and love of music is also a call to personal conversion and to a closer relationship with Jesus in our own lives as well a signal that this is a time of hope and renewal for the church.

So now let us joyfully prepare to join in our entrance hymn, the great anthem for the year of Faith we currently celebrate; 'Credo Domine.'