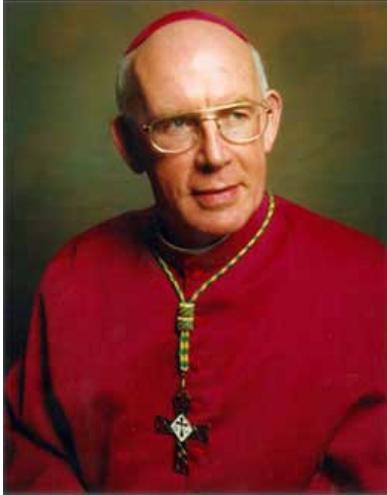




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Priests apologise for concelebrated Easter Mass



Archbishop Sean Brady

The three Augustinian priests who permitted a Church of Ireland rector in Drogheda to celebrate Mass with them on Easter Sunday, in commemoration of the 1916 Rising and the Battle of the Somme, have apologised unreservedly to Roman Catholic Church authorities and given an undertaking not to do so again.

A statement released by the Augustinian Order read: "The Irish Province of the Augustinian Order deeply regrets the pain, confusion and damage caused as a result of the Easter Sunday Eucharistic celebration at its church in Drogheda.

The statement claimed that the three priests, 'Fr' Richard Goode, 'Fr' Ignatius O'Donovan and 'Fr' Noel Hession "having reflected on the seriousness of their actions," have written to the Archbishop of Armagh, Archbishop Sean Brady as well as other 'dignitaries', apologising

"unreservedly for the ill-considered celebration and gives an absolute commitment as to future conduct in matters liturgical."

"In an effort to bring closure to the issue, neither the Augustinians involved nor the Augustinian Order, will be making any further statement in relation to the matter."

The Church of Ireland rector at St Peter's in Drogheda, the 'Rev' Michael Graham, who took part in the Mass, said: "I respect and understand the position of all Augustinian priests involved. I will continue to pray for the visible unity of the church."

However, it turns out that the controversy has served to make public a similar occurrence at a scouting event in Dublin two years ago.

The Roman Catholic Church forbids their priests to concelebrate the Eucharist with "priests or ministers of Churches or ecclesial communities which are not in full communion with the Catholic Church".

That recognition will come only when these Churches not in full communion with Rome come into line and bow before "the chair of St Peter" and recognise the Pope as the head of Christendom.

That is where ecumenism is leading the so-called Protestant denominations.

Would that God's people who insist on staying within these denominations would recognise that and obey God's Word and separate.

Comment

An interesting comment appeared in The Irish Independent of May 22nd. "Pressure was



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brought to bear on the Provincial of the Augustinian Order in Ireland, Fr Gerry Horan, to secure apologies and retractions. The heavy hand of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith - the former Inquisition - also pointed its bell, book and candles at the head of the Augustinians in Rome, Fr Robert Prevost. The message was blunt: 'You scalp the Iggy-ites, or we will'.

An outspoken critic of the Drogheda Eucharistic concelebration was the number two in the Vatican's section for ecumenism, Bishop Brian Farrell.

He is an Irish member of the ultra-orthodox Legionaries of Christ. Both the timing and his prominent role in the silencing of the Drogheda monks have proved to be unfortunate for Bishop Farrell.

Last Friday Pope Benedict took decisive action against "the filth" of clerical child sexual abuse when he ordered the Mexican founder of the Legionaries, Father Marcial Maciel, who faced multiple allegations of child rapes, to a life of prayer and repentance.

This censure is a severe blow on an order which is dubbed the "millionaires of Christ" for its sinister links with wealthy and powerful figures in Latin America.

The message has not been missed in Drogheda: it took Rome thirty years to discipline Fr Maciel, and less than thirty days to silence Fr Iggy."