



## Pastoral formation before the visit of the Eucharistic Congress Bell

The Eucharistic Congress Bell began its pilgrimage through the Dioceses of Ireland on St. Patrick's Day in 2011. Like St. Patrick's Bell, the Congress Bell is being rung across the land calling God's people together, to hear anew the good news that God is present among us and calls us to communion. The forthcoming Eucharistic Congress offers us an opportunity to reflect together on the place of the Eucharist in our lives, as individuals and as communities.

The pilgrimage of the Congress Bell is dependent on the willingness of volunteers who will carry the Bell and bring it to cities, towns and parishes throughout the land. These volunteers have a unique opportunity to present an invitation within their local community to join the journey to the 50th International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin and express its theme in a very practical way – as agents of Communion with Christ and with one another.

### The pattern of the Bell's pilgrimage in your diocese and your involvement:

- The Bell will be handed over to you by a neighbouring diocese. There is a „road-side“ prayer service that accompanies this special moment in the pilgrimage.
- Accompany the Bell to the designated venues, participating in visits and vigils.
- Participate in the final handing over of the Bell to the next diocese, wishing them well as they continue the pilgrimage.

### Elements of the Pilgrimage:

Joining the journey  
Singing the Congress Hymn  
Praying and distributing the Congress Prayer  
Praying with the Icons as the starting point for reflection

- Our lady of Refuge and St. John
- Christ the Pantocrator
- Elijah and the Raven
- Pentecost

### Stay involved

- Volunteer for the Congress
- Register as a pilgrim
- Encourage others to get involved
- Tell others about your experience

### Visit the Congress Website:

[www.iec2012.ie50th](http://www.iec2012.ie50th)

### *The Be-attitudes of the Congress Volunteer*

#### *Be energetic and enthusiastic:*

Our enthusiasm in being part of hosting the 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress should shine through everything we do for our pilgrims, leaving a positive, lasting impression.

#### *Be welcoming:*

Greet everyone with a smile.  
Have a polite, caring approach.

#### *Be informed and knowledgeable:*

Know the answers to the most frequently asked questions.  
Give clear, accurate directions and other information.

#### *Be visible and proactive:*

Position ourselves so that we are easily accessible and can be approached for assistance.



Anticipate pilgrim's needs and offer our assistance.  
Go out of our way to "make their day".

*Be courteous and professional:*

Look the part – show the pride that we have in wearing our uniform at all times.  
Be kind, helpful and polite regardless of time pressures and other factors.

*Be safe*

Act safe  
Think safe

**CODE OF ETHICS AND GOOD PRACTICE**

Ensure your attitude and behaviour towards the pilgrims at all times respects the rights, dignity and worth of every human being.

Maintain appropriate boundaries when dealing with pilgrims.

Respect the physical integrity of the pilgrims. This should not preclude normal spontaneous expressions of warmth or happiness provided they are acceptable to all parties concerned.

Ensure that the privacy of the pilgrims is respected at all times.

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES**

Be ready for them at all times

Follow the instructions of your Team Leader, Diocesan Delegate and the Bell Pilgrimage Coordinator.  
Direct people in a calm direct way to the nearest exit.

**HAZARDS TO LOOK FOR**

Blockages to entry / exit routes – extremely dangerous and needs urgent attention. The capacity of any venue is based on the clear exit routes.

Litter and Debris – health hazard if left, could cause a blockage, and could be a fire risk.

Items or substances that could cause slips or trips – may cause injury or blockage to entry / exit.

Poor lighting – extremely dangerous causing serious problems during entry / exit / during an emergency.

Remember – Never place yourself or others in danger.

**Enjoy ourselves:**

Our enthusiasm will be contagious to our pilgrims.

Go out of our way to be of assistance to them.

Believe that God is doing far more than the eye can see!

**What you are dealing with:**

The Bell house, the Bell plinth and the Congress Icons

**Who you are dealing with:**

Volunteers on your team, the Team Leader, your Diocesan Delegate, the IEC 2012 Bell Coordinator and all those who will gather in response to the Bell.

**Coordinating Group**

It would be ideal to have a small group of people involved in planning and organising the various details that need to be attended to in preparing for the Bell and to ensure that the following details are followed. This group may be part of



the Pastoral Council, or made up from people of various groups in the parish; eg Adoration, Legion of Mary, Youth group. This group/team will be responsible to look after the details of walk; safety issues; liaison with Garda and town/county council etc. This group will inform the Diocesan Eucharistic Congress delegate (Fr. Winkle) of their decision and planning.

### **Pilgrimage Walk:**

Choose a starting point in the parish from which the Bell with Icons will be walked to the Parish Church. Ensure that the path is safe and well lit or that lights be provided with Bell pilgrims. (*Weather can affect route chosen*)

The purpose of the walk is to highlight the Eucharistic Congress: therefore the Bell should be rung on the journey at some stages. There may be moments when the Bell will become stationary for a time which will allow volunteers to speak to people or give out leaflets. Prayer cards and times of liturgies that will take place ought to be available to give out to people.

A number of people should be available to walk with the Bell.

At least 4 people needed to carry Bell at all times and 1 to ring Bell on the journey  
Another 4 people needed to carry the Icons.

Local Gardaí should be contacted when arranging the route. They may also accompany the route for safety reasons. The local Council should also be informed.

Two cars should accompany the Bell:

to travel in front and at the rear in a safety role

### **When the Bell arrives at the Church.**

Welcome in the Church grounds; (weather permitting)

Procession into the Church with song if possible.

Priest welcomes the Bell and Icons.

### **Placement of the Bell in the Church:**

It should be placed to one side, near the sanctuary.

It should not be placed in front of the Altar.

The Icons may be placed in the Sanctuary as focal points of prayer;  
they should not obscure the Altar.

### **Liturgy Options:**

Liturgy of Hours

Adoration

Rosary

Penitential Service

Confession



Mass  
Angelus

### **Bell Leaving**

Bell Leaves Parish accompanied by a few parishioners who will hand it over to the next parish.

### **Invite**

It will be important to invite neighbouring parishes, villages to take part in some part of the walk and to attend at least one of the Liturgies.

### **Promotion**

Promotion of the Bell Pilgrimage before its arrival will be vital if it is to be successful. Ensure that it is on the parish Bulletin and where possible in local paper and on local news radio. Parish schools should be informed of the visit. The visit of the Bell to a parish is an opportunity to call people to prepare for Christmas or celebrate the Lord's Birth.

### **Time of Arrival and Departure from Parish**

Times may vary a little from parishes but it is hoped that the Bell will arrive on time and leave on time according to our schedule. These times may change due to local request regarding time.

### **Schools**

If the bell is not going to the parish schools, when possible invite pupils to Church to take part in a prayer service or Mass when the Bell is in the parish; parents could also be invited to attend. This is possible where schools is near the Church.

### **Ecumenical**

Other Christian denominations may be invited to take part in a Liturgy of the Hours/Service or the Bell may visit one of their Churches. The local group will be best placed to see if this is possible.

### **The Bell:**

Extracts from Cardinal Brady 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011

*The Annals of Ulster record a long association between Saint Patrick and sacred bells. The Annals mention in particular the 'Bell of the Testament'. This was said to be one of the treasures buried with Saint Patrick. It is said to have been later willed to Saint Colmcille who gave the Bell to the Church in Armagh. The tradition of Patrick also has it that he would leave a small hand bell in every new Church he consecrated as a Bishop.*



*An example of a lam-chlog of that time can be found today in the National Museum of Ireland. So, in his work of evangelisation, of bringing the joy of the Gospel to the Irish people, the bell had an honoured place in the mission of our National Apostle. It called the people to pray. It invited them to pause from their busy and distracted lives and to turn to what gives life to the spirit and the soul. It beckoned people to meet Jesus himself in his Word and in the Eucharist.*

*The Eucharistic Congress Bell has a more recent history but its purpose is still the same. Originally from the Dominican Convent School in Portstewart it was used to usher in the new millennium in Glendalough in the Jubilee year 2000. It was used to summon us to what Pope John Paul II called the new evangelisation that is the mission of the Church at the beginning of the third millennium. That call to a new evangelisation will continue to ring out in every parish the bell will visit. It will ring out in memory of Patrick who, in spite of his personal weakness and the many obstacles that came his way, burned with zeal for the hope, life and love that the message of Christ offered to the people of Ireland. The bell will call every one of us to take up that mission from Patrick and make it our own in living out our baptismal call.*

*The Congress Bell is not a megaphone shouting for attention above all the other noise of our lives. It is not even a special ring tone designed to stand out from the crowd. It is a simple bell that tolls softly. It invites each one of us to quietly think again about the faith that brought courage, peace and hope to so many generations of Irish people at home and across the world. For those who have forgotten or rejected their faith, it is a gentle call to give faith in Jesus Christ and in His Word another chance.*

---

It is interesting when you ask people about their experience of bells: they often speak about the following: eg. School bell; door bell; bell on a ship; Angelus bell; bell to identify person in community; bell to wake up;

A discussion around bells can generate interest.

Icons accompanying the Bell



*The Icon of Our Lady of Refuge and St. John the Evangelist will be based on a 14th Century icon from the Poganovo Monastery. It shows John the Evangelist and Mary as they might have been beneath the cross, evoking the text of John 19:26-27. Mary is confirmed as mother of the Church. In the person of St. John, the whole Church is gathered at the foot of the cross. The beloved disciple looks out from the icon, inviting us into this new communion with Christ through Mary. The Icon thus highlights both the Marian and Johannine aspects of the ecclesial community – we are called to be fruitful bearers of the Word and Beloved disciples. "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." (Luke 8:21) Iconographer: Philip Brennan.*



*The oldest surviving icon of Christ Pantocrator dates from around the 6th or 7th century (from St Catherine's monastery, Mt Sinai). The IEC Pantocrator icon is based on an icon found in the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos in the 16th Century. It depicts Christ holding the open Gospel in His left hand and blessing us with His right hand. "Christ gathers us to listen to hear, to be nourished and to be formed into a community by God's Word." The text inscribed in the Book "The Word was made flesh and lived among us" reminding us that Jesus is the eternal Word, spoken by God in the beginning Iconographer: Richard Sinclair*



*The Icon of Elijah and the Raven is in the Byzantine Museum in Athens and dates from the 17th Century. "Christ gathers us to be nourished by the Bread of Life." In some respects it is not the most obvious choice and requires some explanation. Elijah is a strong prophet, but we meet him here at his most vulnerable. He has begun to realise that his own spiritual energy is not enough to sustain Him. To that extent, he may capture quite well the 21st century experience of a Church in need of new energy; energy which only God can provide. The bread and water brought by the raven nourish Elijah for his long journey to the Holy Mountain. In that sense they pre-figure the Eucharist, which is food for our journey to the Holy Mountain where God has prepared a banquet for all the nations (Is. 25)*  
Iconographer: Colette Clarke



*The Pentecost Icon from Staronikita Monastery, Mount Athos is the inspiration for our fourth image. It dates from the 16th Century and presents the classic group of the early Christian community. The community has "moved on" however. Mathias has already taken the place of Judas. Paul (as an apostle to the Gentiles) also appears, together with Luke and Mark. Christ holds out to the Apostles the scrolls with the Good News, symbolic of the mission which flows from the Paschal Mystery. "Christ gathers and strengthens us for Mission by the Word and the Bread of Life." The coming of the Holy Spirit is what transforms the Church into a missionary Church. Those who come to the Congress "from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2) will be invited to return home and to share the promise with their children and "all who are far off" – whether physically or spiritually. The Pentecost icon will serve as a reminder that the "ekklesia" that gathers for the Eucharist is also sent out to the ends of the earth.*  
*The choice of the Pentecost image highlights the importance of the 'epiclesis' (let your Spirit come upon these gifts) in our prayer and its importance as our source of energy for mission.*  
Iconographer: Colette Clarke