

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor celebrates his 80th birthday



Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor celebrated his 80th birthday on Friday 24 August. The Cardinal is the first Archbishop Emeritus of Westminster - all of his predecessors died in office.

Since leaving Westminster in 2009, the Cardinal has spent a great deal of time in Rome. In October 2009, The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, appointed him to two important Vatican congregations that select bishops for most dioceses of the Latin-rite Catholic Church worldwide – the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples. In this role, the Cardinal was directly involved in the appointment of bishops for England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, as well for countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas and Oceania.

He was also appointed by the Holy See in 2010 to oversee the Visitation of the Archdiocese of Armagh – a visitation intended to assist the local Church on her path of renewal.

In 2010 he received two honorary doctoral degrees. One from the national Catholic University of Notre Dame, Indiana for his 'life-long devotion to the unity of the Church and to ecumenism, your witness to the Gospel, and most recently to the problems caused by the movement of peoples. So many of your accomplishments reflect what we hold out to our students as ideals for Catholic Christians.' The other from Boston College, Massachusetts, for his 'powerful example of faith, pastoral care, and commitment to Roman Catholicism.'

The Cardinal received another request from the Holy Father in 2011 - to serve as his official representative to India to mark the Silver Jubilee of Pope John Paul II's visit to India.

On turning 80, the Cardinal ceases to be an active member of the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and all the other offices within the Roman Curia. He can no longer vote in a Papal Conclave. He will remain a Cardinal and will hold the titular church of the Basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva until his death.

In November 2012, the Cardinal will be travelling to Bangladesh, to serve as the Holy Father's representative in marking the 125th anniversary of the creation of the Diocese of Dhaka and 400 years of the presence of the Christian faith in this part of South Asia.

