

An Announcement by the House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland

Agreement with Trinity College, Dublin

The House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland is pleased to be able to announce today the conclusion of two key agreements with the University of Dublin, Trinity College. These agreements build very positively on our long standing relationship and history with the University and position both the University and the Church of Ireland effectively in a specific partnership for the future.

1. On 24 September 2008 the Board of Trinity College, Dublin approved the agreement which will cover the arrangements between the University and the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.

We are encouraged that both institutions have been able to reach an agreed conclusion on the management of the course relating to the degree Master of Theology, its oversight, teaching and financial arrangements that reflects a true partnership between our two institutions.

The agreement expressly recognizes the Bishops' plan and its objectives, such as was presented to the Church at major meetings in Spring 2007 and it recognizes that the academic aspirations contained therein will form the basis for the review of the agreement.

2. On 8 October 2008, the Council of the University passed the proposals for the degree Master of Theology. This means that the course is now fully approved and the team appointed by the Bishops can proceed to implement the proposed new curriculum.

We feel it is a very positive development for both Church and University that we have an agreement for a partnership which recognizes the relationship between an institution which is committed to faith formation and one which is committed to independent academic and scholarly education and research. This significant development seeks to use the best of both by the informing and challenging of one another in a way which is creative and breaks new ground. It also does so through the recognition of mutual validity and integrity.

We believe this announcement is a critical milestone towards the provision of effective and professional training and formation to enable clergy and laity to be prepared for the mission of the church in twenty-first century Ireland in the manner we have clearly outlined to the church.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the many people who worked on finalizing this agreement in the University and the Church of Ireland and to those from other institutions who have given a great deal of help and support.

The House of Bishops

October 2008