



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

Rt Rev Robert Byrne CO
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

Bishop's House, 26 West Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle, NE3 4ES
Tel: 0191 228 0003 | Fax: 0191 274 0432 | Email: bishop.robert@rcdhn.org.uk | Web: www.rcdhn.org.uk

Announcement at St Mary's Cathedral and St Dominic's, Newcastle **1st/2nd May 2021**

It is now three weeks since Canon Michael McCoy's tragic death and Fr Simon Lerche and I are well aware of the deep sense of loss and sadness that many of us are feeling at this time. Canon Michael played a pivotal role in this Diocese for many years and was well loved by many of those he ministered to in his various appointments, including his final appointment as Dean here at the Cathedral and Parish Priest of St Dominic's. He also taught at Ushaw College for a number of years and carried out duties for the Bishops' Conference. He was a great friend to many of us. His loss is felt not just within this Diocese, but also by many people across the Church.

Our sense of loss is only compounded by the circumstances of his death, and quite naturally, there will also be a feeling of anger and confusion surrounding what has happened. We know that these are borne from a good place, a desire to know what has happened, to know the facts of the matter, and to understand the events which led to this tragedy. There will be an inquest as required by law. In due course, I hope there will be answers to some of the questions which remain unresolved for the moment. Please be assured that Canon Michael received much support before his death and I know he was grateful for it.

Canon Michael's funeral Mass and cremation have taken place, and at the request of the family, these were small and private ceremonies. I know that you will keep Canon Michael's family in your prayers at this time, and we will continue to offer whatever support we can to them.

In the meantime, please pray for the repose of Canon Michael's soul that he may find the peace that he has always desired. Please pray, too, for his family and for the healing of our diocese. We commend the clergy and faithful of the Diocese and beyond to the care of Our Blessed Lady Immaculate and St Cuthbert.

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