

Eucharistic Congress Bell gets big Limerick welcome

■ Hundreds attend ceremony in St John's Cathedral for arrival of bell to be used at next year's Congress

Eugene Phelan

IT is the Olympic flame of athletics and this week and next thousands of Catholics in Limerick will get a chance to see and touch it.

And according to the Church they will get a flavour of the huge sense of renewal that will sweep the Catholic faithful in Ireland next June thanks to the arrival of the National Eucharistic Congress Bell in the city.

It arrived in Limerick on Monday afternoon from the neighbouring Cashel and Emly Diocese and will be brought to all nine pastoral areas in the Limerick Diocese before moving onto the Kerry Diocese on Wednesday of next week.

The bell was brought to St. John's Cathedral on Monday night for a special Mass to celebrate its arrival, led by Diocese Administrator Fr Tony Mullins, who said the bell's visit to the Diocese was an opportunity to begin preparing for next year's International Eucharistic Congress in Ireland.

"The Eucharistic Congress will be most timely, not just in the terms of the Catholic faithful's need to get a deeper understanding and renewal of the roll that the Mass and Eucharistic plays in our lives but for society in general to have a period of reflection in a time of great spiritual need.

"It will be an opportunity for people who perhaps have become disconnected from their faith for whatever reason to be renewed in their faith and right now, in a society in which people are hurting badly, faith is more important than ever.

"The arrival of the Congress Bell will begin this process in our diocese, sow the seed for a greater sense of renewal next year and hopefully people will take comfort in their faith more and more."

Parishioners are asked to contact their local priest for details on the bell's stay in the Diocese. All details are also published on the Limerick Diocese website www.limerickdiocese.org

The bell, which has been brought on a pilgrimage since last St Patrick's Day from diocese to diocese as part of the build-up to next year's Eucharistic Congress, finally crossed into the Diocese of Limerick on Monday last from neighbouring diocese Cashel & Emly for a nine-day stay that finishes at Caherconlish Parish on Monday afternoon.

Fr Alphonsus Cullinan, Diocesan Delegate for the International Eucharistic Congress, which takes place next June in Dublin, said it is an ideal opportunity for the people of Limerick to begin preparations for and understanding of what the Eucharistic Congress means.

He added: "The bell is a key symbol for the Eucharistic Congress. It begins preparations and raises awareness for the Congress, which will be the biggest celebration of our faith on this island since Pope John Paul II visited here in 1979."



Big entrance: the 1932 Eucharistic Congress Bell arriving at St John's Cathedral this week

pictures: kieran



Mary Butler, Casement Avenue Janesboro, ringing the 1932 Eucharistic Congress Bell in St John's. Mrs Butler's late father Jack Wade and late brother, Br Michael Wade, attended the 1932 Congress, and she brought along a flag and a scroll from that historic occasion



Dolly O'Brien from St Patrick's parish, who attended the 1932 Eucharistic Congress as a 10-year-old girl, ringing the 1932 Eucharistic Congress Bell with Fr Tony Mullins, diocesan administrator



Members of the public ringing the bell which will be brought to



Members of the public ringing the 1932 Eucharistic Congress Bell on its