

Archbishop O'Brien to Participate in Apostolic Visitation of Irish Seminaries

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop of Baltimore, at the invitation of Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York and with the approval of the Holy See, will assist in the Apostolic Visitation of Irish seminaries as called for by Pope Benedict XVI in his March 19, 2010 pastoral letter to the people of Ireland.

The Visitation will examine all aspects of priestly formation and is pastoral in nature, "intended to assist the local Church on her path of renewal," the Holy Father wrote.

Archbishop O'Brien will accompany Archbishop Dolan and the other members of the Visitation team to Rome later this month to visit the Pontifical Irish College. The first week of February, the team will travel to Ireland to visit St. Patrick's College, Maynooth; Saint Malachy's College, Belfast; All Hallows College, Dublin; Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Dublin.

"This is a collaborative effort involving the Bishops of Ireland in an attempt to review the past and present formation programs at the Irish seminaries in an effort to contribute to their spiritual health and growth, as well as an increase in priestly vocations," Archbishop O'Brien said.

The team will conduct one-on-one interviews with present and recent students, faculty and staff. Separate Apostolic Visitations of the four Metropolitan Archdioceses and Religious Houses in Ireland are also being conducted by separate visitation teams. The visitations are expected to be completed by Easter 2011.

According to the Archdiocese of Dublin, "When the Visitation is complete, the Holy See, after reviewing all the material submitted by the Visitors and offering suggestions for the spiritual renewal of the Archdioceses, Seminaries and Religious Houses, will issue a comprehensive summary of the results of the Visitation.

Archbishop O'Brien led the Apostolic Visitation of U.S. Seminaries and houses of

priestly formation in 2005.