

# Archbishop O'Brien will participate in Irish visitation



Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien

Baltimore Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien is heading to Rome and Ireland early this year as part of an Apostolic Visitation of Irish seminaries called by Pope Benedict XVI in his March 19, 2010 pastoral letter to the people of Ireland.

Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York is leading the visitation of seminaries and, with the approval of the pope, invited the Baltimore archbishop to assist.

Catholic News Service reported in November that the visitation of seminaries was expected to make sure screening policies and educational programs to improve child protection were in place in the wake of the child sex abuse crisis in Ireland.

The visitation is part of a larger effort that will also involve four archdioceses and religious orders. British Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, retired archbishop of Westminster, will conduct the visitation of the Archdiocese of Armagh; Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston will conduct the visitation of the Archdiocese of Dublin; Archbishop Thomas Collins of Toronto will conduct the visitation of the Archdiocese of Cashel; and Archbishop Terrence Prendergast of Ottawa, Ontario, will visit the Archdiocese of Tuam.

Four visitators, including two nuns and two priests, will investigate religious houses in Ireland.

From the archdiocesan news release:

*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 Visitators 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.*