

# Irish cardinal attends Anglican synod, preaches in Trinity chapel

DUBLIN, Ireland – An Irish cardinal has made an unprecedented ecumenical gesture by attending a Church of Ireland service and by preaching in a once-forbidden Anglican chapel.

Cardinal Sean Brady of Armagh, Northern Ireland, became the first Catholic Irish primate or cardinal to attend a Communion service at the Church of Ireland General Synod and to preach in the chapel of Trinity College Dublin.

At the service marking the close of the Anglican Church's synod in Armagh May 10, he told the congregation: "We live in remarkable times."

The following day, speaking in the 18th-century chapel in Dublin, Cardinal Brady said: "I suspect it would have been almost unimaginable at that time (of its construction) to foresee a Catholic archbishop of Armagh preaching in this chapel at something called an ecumenical service.

"I thank God this morning for the immense progress we have made on the journey of mutual respect and Christian solidarity between the Christian traditions of Ireland," he said. "That the greater part of this progress has happened in recent years, and more quickly than many could have imagined, is grounds for even greater hope about God's plans for the unity of his followers."

Trinity College was founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592 as Ireland's first university, and for nearly four centuries it was one of the key institutions of the Protestant Ascendancy under British rule.

Catholics were not admitted to Trinity College until 1793, and they were denied university scholarships late into the 19th century. Until the 1970s, Catholics required a dispensation from their local bishop before they could attend the college. From 1940 to 1972, it was a sin for a Catholic to enter Trinity College's gates to take a shortcut across its grounds.