



Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland

William Joseph Walsh 1841-1921

Born in Dublin, William Walsh studied at the Catholic University Dublin (now UCD) and later at St Patrick's College Maynooth, becoming President of the college in 1885. He was a leading voice in Irish public life on issues of land reform, home rule and education. His campaign for university education for Catholics was influential in the establishment in 1908 of the National University of Ireland. In that year, he was elected first Chancellor of NUI and played a major role in its early development.

This lecture has been arranged by NUI as part of the Decade of Centenaries programme.



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National University of Ireland

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Archbishop William Walsh

First Chancellor of the National University of Ireland
(1908-1921)

by Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin

Response from Professor Michael Laffan

Wednesday 4 November 2015 at 6.30 p.m.

Old Physics Theatre, Newman House, 85/86 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2



Opening Remarks

I am delighted to welcome you tonight to this lecture on my predecessor, Archbishop William Walsh, the first Chancellor of the National University of Ireland. In this Decade of Centenaries, NUI considered it appropriate to focus on a remarkable figure not merely for his importance to the early development of the University but as a figure of major influence in the history of the Irish state.

William Walsh was a leading voice in Irish public affairs, with a formidable and diverse range of interests and abilities. Over the course of the evening, we can expect that the social, political and educational issues of interest to William Walsh will be explored, as will the impact of his life and legacy in home rule, land reform, and education.

It is a great pleasure to welcome our honoured speakers this evening. Diarmuid Martin was appointed Archbishop of Dublin in 2004, 119 years after the appointment of William Walsh to the same position. I am very pleased that Professor Michael Laffan will respond, and we are grateful to both speakers for participating in this event.

Finally, it is a great pleasure to welcome all our guests to this particularly special venue. We are very grateful to UCD for giving us access to Newman House for this lecture on William Walsh, who himself passed through its doors as a student.

I look forward to what promises to be a great discussion tonight on this key and often-controversial figure.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Maurice Manning". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a horizontal line.

Dr Maurice Manning
Chancellor

WILLIAM WALSH

From the eve of the first Home Rule crisis to the final months of the War of Independence, William Walsh's episcopacy spanned a critical period in the evolution of modern Ireland (1885-1921). Throughout those decades, the archbishop played a key role in the life of Ireland and the birth of the new nation, to the extent that, while the Anglo-Irish war raged on, his coffin was draped in the tricolour of the republic. Yet of all of his endeavours, the *Irish Independent* identified the establishment of the National University as the 'crown of his life's work'.¹

Keogh, Daire (2008), "William J. Walsh, 1908-21" in *The National University of Ireland 1908-2008: Centenary Essays*, Dublin, UCD Press.

William Joseph Walsh was born in Dublin in January 1841. He undertook third-level studies at the Catholic University of Ireland under John Henry Newman, and continued his education at St. Patrick's College Maynooth in the field of clerical studies. He would later become Professor of Moral and Dogmatic Theology (1867-78), Vice-President (1878) and President (1881) of St. Patrick's College. He was ordained in 1866, and appointed Archbishop of Dublin in 1885.

Archbishop Walsh was possessed of great energy and a formidable intellect. The breadth of his interests and abilities may be gauged by the diverse subjects of his publications, ranging from Catholic education and Gregorian music to bimetallism. He lived in a period of intense political ferment, and took an active part in public affairs of a political, social, and educational nature.

William Walsh's role in political affairs was shaped by his sympathies for



A meeting of Irish bishops in 1895 planned to raise the motion to condemn cycling by members of the clergy. Archbishop Walsh cycled to the meeting.

¹ *Irish Independent*, 9 April 1921.

constitutional nationalism and open support for Home Rule. He was a keen proponent of agrarian reform, and a passionate advocate for the rights of tenant farmers, offering practical assistance and exerting political influence on land issues and campaigns. His relationship with constitutional nationalism changed over time. He initially supported prominent Irish Nationalist Charles Stewart Parnell, and assisted him in exposing Richard Pigott's incriminating letters as forgeries. Although he at first refused to condemn Parnell following the outbreak of the O'Shea-Parnell divorce crisis, he was later heavily critical of his leadership and withdrew support from the Irish Parliamentary Party.

In addition to his interest in politics, Archbishop Walsh was passionate about education. He was a lecturer and a scholar, and held a position in both the Senate of the Royal University of Ireland and in the Commission of National Education. As Archbishop of Dublin, he established 70 new schools and guaranteed state funding for two new Catholic teacher training colleges. Throughout his career, he fought for radical change in Irish university education. He was elected the first Chancellor of the newly established National University of Ireland in 1908, guiding the NUI through its difficult early years. His time in office was shaped by both the challenging nature of Irish society and the turbulent dynamic within the newly established federal university.

He held the position of Chancellor until his death in office in April 1921.

Most truly yours
John H. Card. Newman

P.S. What has struck me at
once, which, ^{though} ~~is~~ an accidental &
secondary, is a real merit, (& I hope
not an impertinence ^{in an old man} to notice) is that
your Latinity is very good

'Most truly yours
John H Card. Newman

P.S. What has struck me at once, which though accidental & secondary, is a real merit, (& I hope not an impertinence in an old man to notice) is that your Latinity is very good'

Letter from John Henry Newman to William Walsh,
1 December 1880

with such
Finally I would request Your Grace to convey
to the Episcopal Committee our thanks for
the straight-forward and valuable testimony
they bear at this moment of trial to
the Constitutional character of the Irish
movement and the absence of crime attending
the present struggle for the National
rights - I am My Lord Archbishop
Yours very faithfully
Chas. J. Parnell

'Finally I would request Your Grace to convey to the Episcopal Committee our thanks for the straight-forward and valuable testimony they bear at this moment of trial, to the constitutional character of the Irish movement, and the absence of crime attending the present struggle for the national right.'

Letter from Charles Stewart Parnell to Archbishop Walsh, 4 June 1887

So little was stated in the
authorized account of the
Senate proceedings, and so
much in the unauthorized
account, that people did not
really understand exactly where
they were. We are a very
suspicious people, perhaps
more so than any other popu-
lace in Europe, and the
popular tendency is to make
things out to be worse than
they are.
Neither Mr nor Mrs Neill
nor I belong to the Dublin

letter, and assuming you
must we recognize in
you the best friend of
our movement
Believe me
Yours very sincerely
Douglas Hyde
(Douglas Hyde)

'So little was stated in the authorized account of the Senates proceedings, and so much in the unauthorized account, that people did not really understand exactly where they were. We are a very suspicious people, perhaps more so than any other populace in Europe, and the popular tendency is to make things out to be worse than they are.'

Letter from Douglas Hyde to Archbishop Walsh, 10 May 1910

ST. ENDA'S SCHOOL,
Cullenswood House
(Oakley Road),
Rathmines,
Dublin.

Telephone 114 Rathmines.

szóil éanna,
Teac Feada Cúitinn,
Ráe Ó Máine,
Daire Áca Cliaé.

15th May 1910.

My Lord Archbishop,

Your Grace showed such kindly interest in St. Enda's school when I first projected it some two years ago, that I feel sure you will be interested in the larger development outlined in the circular which I enclose. Cullenswood House, large as it is, is not large enough for the forty boarders which we now number; and as everything points to the fact that the school will continue to grow, a change has become inevitable. As no change has to be made, I think it better to make it at once rather than to continue for another year or two here with makeshift arrangements, such as the renting of an additional house, etc. The place that offers is singularly beautiful and in many respects singularly suitable. It is known as 'The Hermitage' and is about half a mile beyond Rathfarnham, - past the convent towards St. Columba's College. The lands include large gardens, pretty woodlands, a little lake, over 20 acres of pasture, etc.

I am enclosing a copy of No. 2 of 'The Maccan' which you have may not have seen. I have the names of the boys and their parents' names.

Yours truly,
Patrick Pearse

Letter from Patrick Pearse to Archbishop Walsh,
15 May 1910



May 6. 1916.

My dear Lord Archbishop,

I send for your private information a copy of the letter I have sent to the Bishops concerned relative to our conversation & the valuable advice you so kindly gave me. I trust your health is improving and that with God's Grace you will soon be restored to health.

Believe me,

My dear Lord Archbishop
Yours Grace's obedt. servt.

J. H. Maxwell

'My dear Lord Archbishop,
I send for your private information a copy of the letter I have sent to the Bishops concerned relative to our conversation and the valuable advice you so kindly gave me. I trust your health is improving and that with God's Grace you will soon be restored to health.'

Letter from General Maxwell to Archbishop Walsh,
6 May 1916

2, Oresto Villas,
Bray,
Co. Wicklow.

23rd May, 1916

Dear Sir,

My husband, Mr Desmond Fitzgerald, was tried by Field General Court martial on Tuesday, 16th May, and sentenced to 20 years Penal Servitude. The sentence was confirmed on 20th May, 10 years being remitted.

Mr Fitzgerald held no rank whatever in the Volunteers and though in the G.P.O. during the Rebellion was there as a non-combatant. He was neither trained nor equipped to fight and merely helped in the distribution of food and in Red Cross work. At his trial Lieut. King, one of the British Officer prisoners in the G.P.O. made a written deposition stating that my husband wore civilian clothes and was not to his knowledge engaged in the fighting at all, and that he treated him while a prisoner with great kindness and consideration.

I understand from my husband that the only evidence against him was his own statement which he made voluntarily, that he was in the Post Office and that he performed certain non-combatant duties there. He was arrested at home here on Wednesday 10th May.

As Mr Fitzgerald was in Mountjoy prison from October last till within about three weeks of the Rebellion on a sentence of six months for a Nationalist speech he had made here at Bray, it is obvious that he could have had no share in the plans for the rebellion.

As, therefore, he was neither responsible for it, nor took a prominent or even a belligerent part in it, his sentence is quite disproportionately severe even among sentences which are all harsh, and I shall be grateful if you will bear the above facts in mind and if opportunity arises will press his claim to a proper trial with a view to revision of the sentence in accordance with the evidence, or will take whatever other action you think suitable, recognising however that my husband, while welcoming inquiry into his case, does not in any wise disassociate himself from his friends whom circumstances placed in the position of combatants.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

Mabel Fitzgerald

P.S. It would give great satisfaction generally in Ireland if conditions of political imprisonment could be obtained for the prisoners sentenced to terms of Penal Servitude; at least they might be permitted to keep their own clothes.

*The Very Rev. Archbishop of Dublin
Dublin*

ÆOLIAN MUSICAL SOCIETY.

Musical Director:

MR. T. H. WEAVING.

Hon. Treasurer:

ART P. MAC AN BHAIRD.

Hon. Secretaries:

THOMAS P. WALL, B.L.

JOSEPH J. BOUCH.

Leonard Webb.

27 Palmerston Road,
Dublin.

15th June 1920

My dear Lord Archbishop,

The Committee of the Æolian Musical Society have under consideration the production of Choral Music during the coming year, and are about to arrange their programmes. They are anxious to have the opinions of persons interested in the development of Choral Music in Ireland, and I am directed to write to ask you what time would be convenient for two members of our Committee to call on you to discuss the matter.

Yours faithfully,

Thomas P. Wall B.L.
His Grace the Most Rev. Wm. J. Walsh, D.D.,
Archbishop of Dublin,
Archbishop's House,
Drumcondra.

per Wm. Webb

Note from the Æolian Musical Society asking Archbishop Walsh if Committee members can visit him to discuss their choral programme for the coming year, 15 June 1920.

Letter from Mabel FitzGerald, the mother of future NUI Chancellor Garret FitzGerald, to the then Chancellor Archbishop Walsh, 23 May 1916.

SEE NOTICE AT BACK. POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS. (Inland Telegrams)		No. of Telegram	
A. Prefix	Code	For Postage Stamps. <i>To be affixed by the Sender.</i>	
Office of Origin and Service Instructions.		Words	Sent
<i>Glasgow.</i>		<i>29</i>	At <i>6.12</i> M.
Charge		To <i>Archbishop Walsh</i>	
By		Address, 9d. Every additional word 1d.	
When a reply is to be pre- paid, write the words "Reply Paid" in the space below. These words are not charged for.		A Receipt for the Charges on this Telegram can be obtained, price One Penny.	
TO <i>Archbishop Walsh, Dublin</i>			
<i>Your Lordship, ten thousand exiles, assembled in Glasgow, beg your intercession to save our brothers in Mountjoy, without surrendering.</i>			
FROM <i>Min. Macnevin, 5 Dundel Drive Glasgow</i>			
The Name and Address of the Sender, IF NOT TO BE TELEGRAPHED, must be written in the Space provided at the Back of the Form.			

'Your Lordship, ten thousand exiles, assembled in Glasgow, beg your intercession to save our brothers in Mountjoy, without surrendering.'

Telegram from Glasgow, around December 1920.

Telephone No. 3626. UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.
STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL.

Dec. 9th 1920

Your Grace,

We beg to inform Your Grace, that at a general meeting of the Students' Council the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

"That this Council desires to place on record its heartfelt gratitude to the Most Rev. D. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, for his efforts to secure the liberation and reprieve of our late fellow-student, Kevin Barry"

We have the honour to be
Your Grace's obedient servants

Sarsfield Hogan } Hon. Secs.
Richard Johnston }

Letter from UCD Students' Representative Council, 9 December 1920, expressing gratitude to Archbishop Walsh for his 'efforts to secure the liberation and reprieve of our late fellow-student, Kevin Barry'

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin attended Oblate School, Inchicore, De La Salle School, Ballyfermot, and Marian College, Ballsbridge. He studied philosophy at University College Dublin and theology at the Dublin Diocesan Seminary. He was ordained priest in 1969 and later pursued higher studies in moral theology at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome. In 1973-74 he was Curate at the Parish of St Brigid in Cabinteely and in 1975 was responsible for the pastoral care of Dublin pilgrims in Rome during the Holy Year. He entered the service of the Holy See in 1976 in the Pontifical Council for the Family. He was appointed the Under Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in 1986, becoming the Council Secretary in 1994. In 1998 he was appointed Titular Bishop of Glendalough and received the Episcopal ordination at the hands of Pope John Paul II in St Peter's Basilica in 1999.

During his service at the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Archbishop Martin represented the Holy See at the major United Nations Conferences on social questions in the 1990's. He also participated in activities of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, especially on the theme of international debt and poverty reduction.

In 2001 he was appointed Archbishop and Apostolic Nuncio and undertook responsibilities as Permanent Observer of the Holy See in Geneva, at the United Nations Office and Specialised Agencies and at the World Trade Organisation. He was appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Dublin in 2003 and succeeded Cardinal Desmond Connell as Archbishop of Dublin in 2004.



Professor Michael Laffan

Michael Laffan studied in Gonzaga College, University College Dublin, Trinity Hall Cambridge, and the Institute for European History in Mainz. He was awarded a Cambridge PhD for a dissertation on international relations in the 1920s. He lectured briefly in the University of East Anglia, Norwich before taking up what proved to be a long-term post in UCD. He taught there for over three decades, served in various positions, including that of head of the School of History, and retired in 2010. From 2010-12 he was president of the Irish Historical Society, and he is now an emeritus professor in UCD. He has lectured widely in Ireland and across the globe.

He has published extensively on Twentieth Century Irish History. His writings include *The Partition of Ireland 1911-1925* (Dublin, 1983), *The Resurrection of Ireland: the Sinn Féin Party, 1916-23* (Cambridge, 1999), and *Judging W. T. Cosgrave* (Dublin, 2014). He has also edited *The Burden of German History, 1919-1945* (London, 1988). He hopes to return to his research on Irish political funerals.

