

Priests hailed for courage in joining clergy

By Elaine Keogh

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THE latest priests to be ordained into the Church were yesterday praised as courageous for joining the Irish clergy at one of the most difficult moments in its history.

Amid the continuing fallout from the shocking revelations contained in the Murphy report, three young men ordained into the Redemptorists "would shape a new future and understanding of priesthood", a director with the order claimed.

Cardinal Sean Brady ordained the three men -- Brian Nolan (31), from Limerick, Tony Rice (31), from Belfast, and Sean Duggan (30), from Galway -- at St Joseph's Church in Dundalk yesterday.

The three ordinations are the highest number of new recruits to the Redemptorists in 10 years.

"The ordinations come at an extremely difficult time for the Irish Church," Fr Dan Baragry, director of formation with the order said. "It is a very courageous decision and choice on their part but I feel they will shape a new future and understanding of priesthood."

Fr Rice, who worked in a bank for four years, said the current difficulties in the Church are symptomatic of a general lack of leadership across society.

"People have reason to be disappointed with several institutions right now: banks, politicians, the Church and so many others," he said. "Courageous and selfless leadership has been seriously lacking up to now."

"However, the mistakes and sins of some do not mean everyone else is the same or that things will always be this way. We need strong, just and accountable leadership to renew our vision and our hope in humanity".

Fr Nolan, a former electronics student, admits that his active religion can be "a conversation stopper" but said that he doesn't "feel the need to hold back from telling people what I'm doing".

He added that priesthood is a "life of service to others".

Fr Duggan gave up a potential career in corporate law to join the priesthood.

"The choices I have made are not knee-jerk reactions," he said. "They have been thought about and talked about over a period of eight years' training. Those eight years have had all the mix that life can bring."

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