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On 5 October 2010, the Prefect and the Secretary of the Congregation for Bishops and representatives from the Holy See held a preparatory meeting in Rome with the Apostolic Visitors named by the Holy Father for the Apostolic Visitation to the four Metropolitan Archdioceses of Ireland: His Eminence Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor; His Eminence Seán P. O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap.; the Most Reverend Thomas C. Collins; the Most Reverend Terrence T. Prendergast, S.J.

Mindful of the tragic abuse of children that has taken place in Ireland, the participants discussed the particular aspects of this important Visitation. Pastoral in nature, the Visitation "is intended to assist the local Church on her path of renewal" (*Pastoral Letter of Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of Ireland*) and is a sign of the Holy Father's desire, as the Successor of Peter, to offer his pastoral solicitude to the Church in Ireland. The Visitors will give particular attention to victims of abuse and their families, but will also meet with and listen to a variety of people, including ecclesiastical authorities, lay faithful and those involved with the crucial work of safeguarding of children.

On 6 October 2010, as had been previously planned, His Eminence Cardinal Seán B. Brady, Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Reverend Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Reverend Dermot Clifford,

Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, and the Most Reverend Michael Neary, Archbishop of Tuam, celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit together with the Visitors and Superiors from the Congregation for Bishops and the Secretariat of State. The meeting that followed, marked by fraternal warmth and mutual collaboration, summarized the discussions from the previous day and focused on the organization of the Apostolic Visitation and the Archdioceses involved.

All participants are hopeful that this significant endeavor will be an instrument of purification and healing for the Church in Ireland and help to restore the trust and hope of the faithful there.

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