



**1<sup>st</sup> December 2015**

## **Media Release**

### **The Bells of the Cathedral of St. Michael and St. John will ring again**

As stage one of the restoration of the Cathedral of St. Michael and St. John comes to completion, one important milestone will be reached on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December at approximately 8am. The original bells of the Cathedral will be returned to the bell tower.

Originally produced in Whitechapel Foundry, London more than 150 years ago, the two bells were removed from the Cathedral bell tower in August 2013, in the early stages of the restoration project. It was discovered they were both damaged and in need of repairs. They were sent back to the Whitechapel Foundry where the headstock and ringing mechanisms of the bells were reconstructed.

The bells will ring again on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December, the Third Sunday of Advent, when Bishop Michael McKenna blesses the restored tower, marking the completion of the first stage of our Cathedral's renewal. At the same time he will open a Door of Mercy in the Cathedral signaling the beginning of the Year of Mercy.

In preparation for the bells to be returned to their rightful place, the bell tower roof has been removed as well as the ladder beams that were supporting the tower throughout the restoration process.

Stone Restorations from Rylstone completed the restoration work. Ron Lodewijks from Stone Restorations said that the operation to replace the bells is complex, given the size, weight and destination of the bells.

"The bells are currently in four crates; two with the bells and two with the associated mechanisms including timber wheels, pulleys and ropes. The bells will be lifted directly from the crates by crane and placed to rest on the massive timber beams within the tower", explained Ron.

"The bells will be then permanently fixed to the beams and the mechanisms will be reconstructed, ready for the bells to ring for the first time in several years".

Stage 2 of the restoration of the Cathedral of St. Michael and St. John will commence in the New Year.

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