

**STATEMENT FROM BISHOP MICHAEL CAMPBELL
RE: FATHER ROBERT BILLING**



20 September 2017

STATEMENT BEGINS:

‘After a total of almost 13 years’ service for Bishop O’Donoghue and then myself, Father Robert Billing’s extended term of service as Bishop’s Secretary and all its accompanying roles - is coming towards its close. It is believed that Father Billing is the longest serving Bishop’s Secretary in the history of the Diocese of Lancaster.

Much has been achieved in his time as Bishop’s Secretary, Secretary to the Trustees since the time of the diocesan financial crisis, Diocesan Communications Officer (the building and running three successive diocesan websites), Secretary to the *Fit for Mission* Review, carrying out the negotiation and reception of several new religious congregations and institutes into the Diocese, the hidden work of handling of the Visa process work for our overseas clergy and religious, diocesan coordinator for the 2010 Papal Visit, the work for testimonials and faculties for visiting clergy, the necessary ground-work ready for the erection of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy, handling the coordination of the various offices in the Pastoral Centre, the oversight of a major reorganisation of the Bishop’s archives, representing me on the Diocesan Safeguarding Commission etc.

The plan is that Father Billing will withdraw from these current roles just before my own retirement and, after a break, he will then commence further studies in Canon Law at Saint Paul University, Ottawa in Autumn 2018.

The whole Diocese owes Father Robert a great debt of gratitude for his service to the Bishops and our Diocese. I know he is grateful to so many of our priests and people who have been so supportive of him in a quiet work that he has carried out at a great personal cost to himself at times.

It will be for the new Bishop to consider how to reorganise and reassign Father Billing’s responsibilities and the gap of a substantial workload involved going forward. Father Billing remains in office for now’.

STATEMENT ENDS

**Rt Rev Michael G Campbell OSA
Bishop of Lancaster**

20 September 2017