

Synopsis of the Diocese of Argyll & the Isles

History of the Diocese

The Catholic Faith was welcomed to our shores and glens some 1500 years ago, primarily brought by Irish monks, of whom the most famous was St Columba. Iona made an incredibly positive contribution not only to Scotland and Ireland but much further afield too. Despite various threats and trials many other ancient, medieval and more recent Christian centres and endeavours spanned our entire diocese, a source of pride and inspiration today. Our present Diocese of Argyll and the Isles was founded in 1878 from the two pre-Reformation dioceses of the Isles and Argyll.

Description of Diocese

The diocese is beautiful, extensive, remote and dominated by sea, lochs and mountains. Most communities are small and far-flung with no town boasting a population larger than 10,000 people. Typically parishes are geographically large and travelling to or even within them – whether by road, ferry or aeroplane – has its challenges.

The diocese covers 31,080km² with a total population of 76,800 of whom 14,399 are Catholics. The diocese covers the Council areas of *Comhairle nan Eilean Siar*, most of Argyll and Bute, much of Highland and part of North Ayrshire (Isle of Arran).

Diocesan Administration

The Diocese is a Registered Charity. The Trustees are the Bishop, Vicar General and Chancellor. The diocese employs a part time Finance Manager, part time finance support officer, part time Safeguarding Secretary and part time Office

Administrator. All other curial appointments are voluntary, whether clerical or lay.

Clergy and Diocesan Structures

The diocese has 3 deaneries, 25 parishes but 45 regular places of worship which are served by 18 priests of whom 14 are incardinated (ordained for Argyll and the Isles). 46 Sunday Masses are celebrated.

4 priests are presently on loan to us: 2 are Nigerian Religious and 1 is Polish diocesan while the final is an Aberdeen priest. There are 5 retired priests. There is 1 bishop.

The diocese has 3 permanent deacons.

The diocese has 2 hermits: one is a priest and one is a sister.

Prayer Centres

There are two Catholic Residential Centres within the Diocese but independently run: *Choc A'Chalmain*/ Catholic House of Prayer, Isle of Iona and Craig Lodge Family House of Prayer in Dalmally.