



Finte na hÉireann-Clans of Ireland

53 Ard Aoibhinn, Athenry, Co. Galway, H65 DR60
Ireland.



Patron: Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland



Accredited as a Civil Society Non-Governmental Organisation by The United Nations.

20 December 2021

A Cháirde,

I hope that, wherever you are in the World, you will be able to celebrate this Winter Solstice in the Celtic tradition or this Christmas in the Christian tradition, with comparatively more familial intimacy and cordiality than we were able to last year. The two celebrations involve birth, with Celts celebrating the birth of another year, while Christians celebrate the birth of Christ. Both are integral to Irish culture and provide an occasion for feasting and congregating with our families.

It is the time of year that many of us pause to assess our lives, while looking to the future with hope for extended light, accompanied by advantageous weather for tilling ground and grazing animals.

It is also the time that the Board of Directors of Clans of Ireland turns its attention toward the Annual Cultural Summit (*an Cruinniú Mullaigh Cultúrtha Bliantúil*). It is hoped that it will be possible to hold a hybrid of our traditional style of physical event, with complimentary video conferencing, on the weekend of April 8th and 9th. However, given the fluctuating nature of the potency of Covid variants, it is clearly too early to be absolutely certain of what we will be able to do. In any event, we will hold a video Summit, as was done in 2019 and 2020, on that weekend. Should we be able to hold a physical event and should the restrictions that are currently in place remain until April, we are likely to be restricted to 50% of the normal total capacity. We will monitor developments over the coming weeks and months so that, in addition to adhering to Irish Government guidelines, the over-arching guiding principle in organising the Summit will be to ensure the welfare of our members and guests. The theme of the 2022 Cultural Summit is *'The anniversary of the terrible fire, at the Four Courts, of June 30th, 1922, which, over seven centuries, destroyed much of Ireland's historical memory'*, with emphasis on a recognition of what was destroyed and how this has impacted on the research of Irish historians and clansmen.

In addition, the Clans of Ireland Order of Merit awards, to be announced on St Patrick's Day, 17th March, will be conferred on individuals who have had an exceptional impact on Irish culture and heritage or who have caused remarkable respect and distinction to be connected to their Clan name. Since its establishment, the Clans of Ireland Order of Merit has become recognised as the most prestigious award for exceptional individual contributions to Irish culture and heritage. The presentation to the new Companions of the Clans of Ireland Order of Merit will be made during the Annual Summit.

Just as we may personally assess our own lives, it is also crucial that any vibrant organisation, whether a business or a not-for-profit, assesses its purpose and its values regularly, if it is to flourish. To not understand what an organisation's purpose is and to not have coherent principles would cause organisational destruction. Clans of Ireland must always keep its purpose within sight and pursue this with resolve. Should modification be sought it should be done with the utmost objectivity and should be clarified effectively to all stakeholders, particularly those with a primary interest, the members. Clarifying fundamental purposes involves an organisational self-confidence that allows it to develop further. In my opinion, Clans of Ireland has established a vibrancy that, if appropriately harnessed, will energise its development to another level as an essential pillar of Irish culture.

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Correspondence address and Registered address: 53 Ard Aoibhinn, Athenry, Co. Galway, Ireland, H65 DR60.

Website: www.clansofireland.ie ~ e-mail address: info@clansofireland.ie

Clans of Ireland is a Company Limited by Guarantee and an independent, voluntary, non-profit making organization, holding charitable status and approved by the Irish Government for the registration and co-ordination of Irish Clans.

Directors:

Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh (Cathaoirleach), Cathaoir Ó Tighearnaigh, CIOM (Rúnaí na Cuideachta), Luke McInerney, Mary Carmody (Cisteoir), Michael O Crowley (France), Daniel Carmody, Laurie J Joyce (Aust), Vincent O'Carroll, Seán McGrath, James Heenan, Patrick Guinness.

Reg. Charity No. C.H.Y. 11585/RCN 20032111 Company Reg. No. 159373



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A clarification of the ethos of Clans of Ireland has been prepared by an ad hoc Ethos Committee of the Board and is to be circulated in the New Year. This is intended to provide a more in-depth understanding of medieval and late medieval kindred group structures in Gaelic Ireland. In addition, it will afford a clearer appreciation of the honour and reputational integrity that is involved for those clans and historical families that have been accepted as members of Clans of Ireland. This clarification may also offer inspiration to clansmen who may wish to show their appreciation of someone, possibly within their own organisation, who may have brought about conspicuous recognition to their historical family or clan and who, it may be felt, are deserving of a nomination to the Order of Merit.

The winner of the 2021 Chiefs and Clans Essay Competition, Declan Keenan, attended the recent launch of “Gaelic Ireland (c.600 -c.1700) Lordship, saints and learning”, the anthology of best of the best essays of the competition during the years 2018 to 2020. He has agreed to present his essay, ‘An Inauguration of a MacWilliam Íochtair at Rausakeera (Mayo) during the Nine Years War’ at the Annual Summit. Having read his essay, I am greatly looking forward to his presentation.

At this time, as this year draws to a close, our thoughts turn to those who we have lost from Clans of Ireland during the past twelve months. It is undoubtedly the case that most members mourn the loss of Dr. Michael Egan, former Cathaoirleach, whose death occurred while still a member of the Clans of Ireland Board of Directors. There were also many others, whose death occurred during 2021 and whose passing we mourn. Our sympathy goes out to their families and friends.

I sincerely hope that this festive season will be, above all else, peaceful for you.

With Best Wishes for Christmas & the New Year,

Le gach dea-ghuí I gcomhair na Nollag agus na h-Athbhliana,

Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh

Cathaoirleach

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