

the whole became a place at peace with itself. A faculty would be issued, but would be limited to the proposed headstone only. [DW]

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Re St Giles, Exhall

Coventry Consistory Court: Eyre Ch, 6 May 2020

[2020] ECC Cov 1

Memorial—inscription in Irish Gaelic—translation

The petitioner sought a faculty for the installation of a memorial stone at the grave of her late mother who, though Irish by birth, had made her life in the UK, where she had been active in the Irish community. The proposed memorial included a Celtic cross, with the emblem of the Gaelic Athletic Association in the centre, projecting from the side of the stone, and the words ‘In ár gcroithe go deo’ in Irish Gaelic, meaning ‘in our hearts forever’.

The Parochial Church Council supported the proposal, albeit by a fine margin, but the Diocesan Advisory Committee did not recommend approval, noting in particular the projection of the cross. Following the expression by the court of a provisional view, the petitioner instead sought approval for such a cross and emblem to be incised into the body of the headstone. The court approved the revised proposal for the shape and design of the memorial.

However, the petitioner resisted provisional views that the words should either be in English or be accompanied by an English translation. The court noted the Churchyard Regulations, which provide that

it is to be remembered that the memorial will be read not just by those who knew the deceased in question but by those who did not. Indeed, the message conveyed to those who did not know the deceased is in many ways more important than the message being given to those who did know him or her.

The court distinguished *re St Peter & St Paul, Nutfield* [2018] ECC Swk 1, where the single Welsh word ‘Tangnefedd’ was permitted on a memorial in a parish with particular Welsh links. While not adjudicating on the merits or standing of English or Irish Gaelic as languages, the court took the view that a message that would be unintelligible—and subject to misinterpretation—to all but a small minority of readers was not appropriate without translation. The court would permit the inscription only if accompanied by a translation of the Gaelic phrase, which could be in a smaller font size. [DW]

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