



21 April 2025
Easter Monday

Dear cousins, family, and friends — Happy Easter!

Easter, as the celebration of Christ's Resurrection, marks a time of renewal, hope, and new beginnings — it serves as a powerful symbol of revival. As Christians, we celebrate our salvation through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, but we are then called to fulfill the laws of Christ by bearing the burdens of others. As the traditional Irish clan was a community built around a chiefly family to ensure communal goals were met and aid provided to those in need, the Easter Gospel message is precisely the spirit of the Brehon Laws and is a profound reason to revive the clan. Indeed, the Brehon Laws of old have much to teach our modern time about charity, justice, compassion, and stewardship — the very things the Gospel message seeks to bring to the world.

In this spirit of revival the election of a chief then mirrors the Easter message of restoration: bringing renewed life and hope to traditions thought lost.

Some may argue that the age of clans and chieftains has passed, that these are mere relics of a distant era with no place in the modern world. They see tradition as nostalgic, quaint, but ultimately unproductive diversion from the pressing concerns of the present. But to them I ask: *What is a people without its roots?*

Traditions are not just artifacts of history; they are vital threads in the fabric of who we are. To dismiss them is to sever ourselves from a profound source of identity, belonging, and wisdom. This truth is perhaps felt even more deeply by those abroad who must live with the few and vague recollections of their great-grandparents' stories — if any at all, and so we must ask: *What is home to those whose families have been away for so many generations? What is the Irish diaspora, if not a community of clans and chieftains bound by history and kinship?*

In the last year we've had quite a bit of exciting change. Last July a digital clan meeting was held to discuss the election of a chief, several candidate families have since been identified, the senior agnatic (male-line) descendants of the famed Florence MacCarthy Reagh (who was elected to be The MacCarthy Mor in the 17th century) have been re-discovered, and great progress has been made towards several new initiatives such as joining Clans of Ireland and laying the groundwork for a "Clans of Carbery" project designed to facilitate greater cooperation between the historical clans and families from the Carbery region. It has taken a great amount of work by many people to get to this point in our history and because of these people we can now announce an update to the Derbhfine election itself.

After more than a decade of genealogical research, consultation and Y-DNA testing, five surviving families descended from the last of the Chiefly MacCarthy Reagh families have been identified and found – namely, the MacCarthys of Toronto, Oak Bluffs, Vancouver, Washington, and Springhouse. Each family has been contacted by email, posted letter, social media, and/or newspaper announcement, and each has declined to accept their candidacy for the office of Chief. So where does that leave us?

As such, and with the support of my own family derbhfine, I am formally offering myself as a candidate for the *Chief of the Name MacCarthy Reagh*. My candidacy is grounded not only in my agnatic descent from the most recent of the chiefly families to have descendants alive today, but also in the absence of any other claimants from among the other surviving branches. Throughout this process, I have worked closely with historians, genealogists, and family representatives to ensure that our traditions and the Brehon Laws are honored and followed.

It is with a great humility and gratitude that I also share the news that my candidacy has received the formal endorsements of The MacAodhagáin of Tethbae, as hereditary Brehon to the MacCarthy Clan, and The Ó Súilleabháin, whose authority has always historically ratified MacCarthy elections. Both gentlemen are esteemed Chiefs in their own right and respected figures within the Gaelic nobility of Ireland, and their support not only affirms the importance of this endeavor, but is a momentous step towards revitalizing the friendships and real cooperation between the MacCárthaigh Riabhach, Ó Súilleabháin, and MacAodhagáin clans. So I am very thankful for The MacAodhagáin's and The Ó Súilleabháin's kind words in their endorsements, and look forward to future collaborations between their clans and ours.

As we celebrate our spiritual salvation and renewal through Christ this Paschaltide, I am also hopeful that we are on the cusp of celebrating our clan's own renewal. I ask that you reflect on what this election signifies as the new chief will prepare lead the clan in new community and charity projects in the spirit of Christian love and our Gaelic-Irish tradition.

On August 13th, the feast of St. Fachtna of Rosscarbery, there will be a secure digital election. Between now and then I call upon each of you to pray, to reflect deeply, and to ask questions. I humbly ask for your vote of endorsement as Chief. In accordance with the guidelines set forth by both the Lord Lyon of Scotland and the Kingdom of Desmond Association, should I be endorsed, I will serve immediately as Ceann Cath for a period of 42 days. During this time, any formal challenges from rightful claimants to the chiefship may be brought forward. These will be published openly and made known to all.

If such challenges are received, the clan will be invited to gather again on September 27th to deliberate and to decide the need for a new election, and the process will begin again. But if no legitimate challenges are received during that time, then at the end of the 42 days, the Ceann Cath shall assume the role of hereditary Chief.

As I pray for all of you and your families' health and well-being, I wish you all a Happy Easter!