

Archbishop of Canterbury to step down, accepts position at Cambridge

News

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March 16 (ENInews)--The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, announced on 16 March that he will step down from the post at the end of 2012 and has accepted the position of Master of Magdalene College at Cambridge University.

Williams, 61, was appointed in 2002 and will take up the academic post as of January, 2013, according to a news release from Lambeth Palace in London, the residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He will continue to carry out all the duties and responsibilities of his office until yearend, the news release said.

"It has been an immense privilege to serve as Archbishop of Canterbury over the past decade, and moving on has not been an easy decision. During the time remaining there is much to do, and I ask your prayers and support in this period and beyond," Williams said in a statement.

"I am abidingly grateful to all those friends and colleagues who have so generously supported Jane and myself in these years, and all the many diverse parishes and communities in the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion that have brought vision, hope and excitement to my own ministry. I look forward, with that same support and inspiration, to continuing to serve the Church's mission and witness as best I can in the years ahead," Williams said.

The news release said that Williams' "intentions have been conveyed to The Queen, who is Supreme Governor of the Church of England and who formally appoints the Archbishop of Canterbury."

The Crown Nominations Commission, which submits two candidates for the position to the prime minister, who advises the Queen, will consider in due course the selection of a successor, the release said.

Williams will be the 35th Master of Magdalene College, succeeding Duncan Robinson, who has held the post for the past ten years. Early in Williams' career, he taught theology at Cambridge and in 1984, became dean and chaplain of Clare College at Cambridge. The university awarded him an honorary doctorate in divinity in 2006. He also holds degrees from Oxford University.

The college said Williams' "very distinguished record, both as a scholar and a public figure, will provide for the whole community a model of the high standards of achievement to which Magdalene is committed." In a news release posted on its website, the college said Williams will work with staff "in the vital task of increasing access and widening participation to students from every background and walk of life."

Williams commented in a statement that he is "very grateful to the college for the honor they have done me, and look forward to being part of such a lively and intellectually rigorous community. I hope I shall be able to continue the exciting developments that have been taking place under the present Master."

The college's website states that there has been a continuous tradition of academic study on its site since 1428. It was re-founded in 1542 and is now includes some 350 undergraduates, 180 graduate students and 80 Fellows, together with 90 administrative and other staff.