



ARCHDIOCESE OF ARMAGH

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November 21, 1996.

Dear Prime Minister,

I wish to thank you very sincerely for your kind letter of the occasion of my retirement and for your very generous remarks. Retirement is not quite like anything one has done before and causes a certain disorientation and requires much adjustment of attitude and life-style. At present, I am still in a curious "in-between" situation, still living in Ara Coeli but not quite belonging. When I get settled into my new residence in Belfast and settled into a new routine of work (for I do hope to be busy!), things will, I hope, be more satisfactory and more fulfilling.

There are many things which I shall miss, and there is a certain loneliness about moving away from friends and familiar faces, accompanied with a sense of relief at being free from what can be at times almost intolerable pressures. My greatest disappointment is not to have seen peace established in Northern Ireland. I know what a great disappointment and frustration this has meant for yourself also.

Peace does at present seem tantalisingly close; the gap between the present demands of Sinn Fein (which seem to be shared by the IRA) and the principles on which your Government and the Irish Government have carefully constructed policy over a long period, seems to have narrowed very significantly. Sir Patrick Mayhew's speech in Manchester was, in my view, excellent and constituted a very helpful contribution to the search for the inclusive talks which are essential in the establishment of peace. If the position which Sir Patrick outlined there can be built upon, then I would have good hopes that Sinn Fein would respond positively and that we can have an unequivocal reinstatement of the IRA 1994 ceasefire. The response of the Unionist Parties is, of course, crucial. I believe, however, that no party will wish to put itself in a position where it could be left to carry the blame for a slide back into violence from which we are all so happy to have - at least partially - escaped. I assure you of my prayers and fervent wishes that your efforts for peace may succeed. You have, even in difficult circumstances in the past, always had the courage to take risks for peace, and I would rank this as among the great merits of your Prime Ministership, and one of the things for which you will be long remembered. I trust that you will see the task completed.

The IRA, however, have still to demonstrate that their commitment to exclusively peaceful methods is sincere and that "Confidence-building" is a two-way street!

I wish you in advance a peaceful Christmas and some period of rest and quiet with your dear wife and family over the coming Christmas. Perhaps we may meet again some time; in any case, I want to thank you sincerely for the courtesy and kindness which you have accorded to me at all times and for the patient way in which you listened to my representations and paid attention to my letters on many occasions.

With warm personal regards,

Yours very sincerely,

+ Cahal B. Daly

Cardinal Cahal B. Daly

The Rt. Hon. John Major, M.P.,
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