

01 DEC '96 12:55 353 1 8252058

ST PAT'S BOYS AC -->0000016/04040

- Pa. 04

P.5 Pg. 02

21 November 1996

"Reassurance"

Rt Rev Monsignor Denis Faul, Dungannon

Peace is neighbours living together. This cannot happen unless there is trust. Trust after a period of conflict cannot be established unless there are reassurances about future behaviour and relationships coupled with regret and remorse for past injuries. Anything less than this is unrealistic and provocative of future troubles because fear has not been removed.

Fear, based on historical divisions and sectarian hostility is the enemy of peace in Northern Ireland. To inspire a permanent secure peace, those who are causing conflict, such as the Provisional IRA and the Orange Order in 1996, must give reassurances that will remove the ancient fears. Trust and confidence can only come from people who believe they are safe and will be treated fairly.

Security and the certainty of fair and just treatment promotes a lasting peace because it enables people of diverse political and religious viewpoints to live together in mutual trust and contentment. This peace requires sacrifices, self denial and a spirit of understanding and cooperation.

The IRA must give reassurances that they will never again use their weapons for political or criminal purposes. This expression of a permanent cease-fire should remove the fear from the Protestant Unionist population and indeed from the Catholic population who very largely oppose them, and from the British. The statement must come from accredited representatives of the IRA with a back up that secures its authority. The Catholic population again must receive a reassurance that punishment beatings will cease. No form of paramilitary policing is acceptable as it is used to take over farms, houses and businesses and to maim young men who stand up to Provos who are drunk and think they can assault their opponent with the help of fascist groups. The Loyalists groups, UVF, UDA, UFF must give similar assurances.

Unless the Provos put forward a credible reassurance of an end for ever to political and criminal behaviour they are not at peace with the long suffering community among whom they live.

(A) But if they can say "never again" to violence then they should be admitted to talks straightaway for the record of violence and political crime in terms of bigotry, discrimination, miscarriages of justice and fascist behaviour is monumental among other talk participants.

Will the Orangemen, through the parties which they lead and control, give a reassurance, "Never another Drumcree!", "Never another 1974 Strike!" to negate the rule of law in the one instance and fair government in the other. A majority which has intimidated a minority for so long has to give reassurances of "never again religious bigotry and intimidation", before they can play a meaningful part in peace talks.

Likewise the RUC, whose Drumcree performance was so treacherous and left the Catholic community in grave peril, have got to give reassurances that they will separate themselves from Orange influence and stop bullying Catholic youths on the road (still at it on Saturday 2 November). The greatest need of *all* the people is for an impartial police force. Perhaps the reassurance we demand, is met by the appointment of Mr Ronnie Flannagan as Chief Constable. He may change the record of non-accountability of the RUC since 1968 into the Police Force we need so much, impartial, free from secretive, secret organisations.

Reassurance must come from the British government that never again will there be racist miscarriages of justice against the Catholic population such as internment, Palace Barracks torture and Castlereagh (still going on) extorted confessions and the activities of the SAS assassination squads and many other dirty tricks. We need reassurance of civilised legal non-racial non-sectarian government, not the usual British "weak with the strong and strong with the weak" type of mismanagement.

The truth is we are all challenged by peace and reconciliation. None of us can adopt a "Holier than thou", "I won't talk to you" approach. Such a line by any of the participants would be hypocritical and pharisaical in the extreme. All who disown violence can talk now.

Let us all be glad to have an opportunity to say to each other the reassurance "Never Again" and mean it. Leave aside, "What Aboutery" and try to be positive and Christian contrite in our approach to peace talks. How fortunate we are to have the

opportunity to end hatred and mistrust and to start to do it now, straightaway, with all weapons and threats laid aside and reassurances from all that violence of all kinds is now laid aside for ever and to build peace and love for the young generation of the Second Millenium.

The main problem in Northern Ireland affecting relationships between the two communities is misinformation or disinformation in its most extreme forms. This leads to violence and murder. All the people of Northern Ireland need to be constantly reassured, constantly to have their fears removed by a continual reaffirmation about their value and worth within the community of Northern Ireland.

Sometimes politicians on both sides use language which seems to support this false information and this leads to increased fear and violence.

It is really words that kill and there is a grave duty on public representatives in Northern Ireland, London and Dublin to use language that reassures people that their legal, political and civil rights are being looked after and not taken away. This duty of reassurance also falls on the clergy of the different Churches not to be making hostile or suspicious statements about other communities. Peace makers must speak the language of peace and reconciliation and avoid the language of defiance, suspicion and confrontation. Only this peaceful way of talking will sustain reassurance and the dialogue that leads to true peace.

Denis Faul.

Rt Rev Monsignor Denis Faul
Dungannon.