

## The influence of the Irish Chaplaincy on Social Policy in Ireland and Britain 1957-2007

Social policy is defined by Davis Donnison as ‘those actions which deliberately or accidentally effect the distribution of resources, status, opportunities and life chances among social groups and categories of people within a country, and thus help shape the general character and equity of its social relations’ (1975). Peter Townsend describes social policy as ‘the institutionalised control of services and organisations to maintain or change social structures and values’ (1981). Bochel reminds us that social policy and administration is concerned with the ‘distribution of welfare and well-being within societies’ (page 7). Furthermore it is concerned with formulation, implementation and delivery. If this is how we choose to define social policy then there is no doubt, having examined empirical evidence recorded in the archives of the Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants (IECE) and having interviewed some of the key actors involved, that the priests and religious of the Irish Chaplaincy have indeed shaped, developed and influenced social policy in both Ireland and Britain in the last fifty years. What is more, they have gone about their work in a humble fashion, often hiding their extreme effectiveness under a bushel. Cowley in his seminal work *‘The Men who Built Britain, the Story of the Irish Navy’* quotes Paul Ricour ‘“to be forgotten, and written out of history, is to die again” will never apply to this special breed of men’. I would like to extend this to include the personnel of the Irish chaplaincy, many of whom are here today, that their tremendous work will not be forgotten and will be written into the history not only of Ireland and Britain but the story of how to influence social policy throughout the world. Because of their humility, the story and the importance of their work is untold. Senator David Norris in a Senate debate on Emigration in 1997 referred to the work of the Catholic Church with emigrants as ‘the wonderful work it has done, which is unpopular, unpaid and unseen, is sometimes forgotten.’ In today’s world as we are challenged by migration on a scale never before witnessed, and for the first time in Ireland, we are hosts to new communities, we can look at the work of the Irish chaplaincy, their excellence in service delivery, campaigning, lobbying and influencing policy over a half a century and learn how to respond appropriately to our own immigrants and learn how to ‘welcome the stranger’.

Fortunately, the records kept by those working for the IECE are meticulous and my exploration of their extensive archives will, I hope help us to piece together the tremendous work its personnel have done on behalf of the Irish Diaspora, in the vacuum left by the Irish and British Governments. One of the priests I interviewed in recent months told me that if he had thought about the political climate when he joined the Chaplaincy London in the Seventies he would not have agreed to take up his position there. These words rang loud for me as I got deeper into this research and I realized the complexity of the issue I was exploring. This story is one of political intrigue; economic booms and busts, the MI 5, international relations and miscarriages of justices, struggle for justice, equality and truth, often and most usually battling against the odds and the establishment. It is the story of history unfolding in Ireland and Britain over very turbulent and difficult decades. The roll call includes the names of the rich and famous as well as the poor and marginalised, the most prominent World and Church leaders of the second half of the twentieth century, Margaret Thatcher, John Hume, Cardinals Hume and O’Fiach, Presidents Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese, as well as the most marginalised: men killed on building sites, young single mothers in exile, disenfranchised prisoners, sufferers of HIV and AIDs, homeless men dying alone and Ireland’s own ethnic community, Travellers. The story unfolds to the backdrop of papal encyclicals and international agreements. Some of the personnel of the Chaplaincy became famous in their own right as a result of their work, for example, Bishop Eamonn Casey, the subject of a BBC documentary, Father Paul Byrne, the recipient of an OBE, decades before Bob Geldof and Bono received such honours.

Bobby Gilmore has explained how: ‘You have to be an optimist to migrate. He poetically states ‘it is the human heart on a journey of hope. You have to match the hope in their eyes. It is a difficult job. They have huge hope to leave home, to make more. They carry the hopes of others. They have to go thorough loss, the break of primary relationships, excitement, loss, isolation and feeling that they are unique. How do they cope?’ As the Chaplains too carry their own loss, pain and grief as fellow migrants. This is what makes the story of the Irish Chaplaincy so poignant, the courage of young men and women, overcoming their own sense of displacement, to battle for justice for Irish people abroad and meeting the consistently changing challenges coming their way. Bishop Hegarty explains it as ‘walking with the

migrant' and this being present with the migrant permeates the story of the Irish Chaplaincy. Fr Gerry Kivlehan refers to the Emigrant Chaplain as prophet, speaking out for those who often are unable to speak for themselves. Elderly men and women in Birmingham, told me of how when they were afraid to go to work, afraid to bring their children to school in the wake of the Birmingham bombing, afraid to speak with their Irish brogue, Fr Taffe was their voice and their courage. It was said that he was 'the right man, at the right time'. Sr Teresa in Birmingham recounted how when, with trepidation she had started work there he had told her 'all you need is love'. A similar sentiment was expressed by Archbishop Michael Neary who explained that Fr Taffe was someone special who was a great communicator and was fearless.

A brief trip through the last five decades show us some of the obstacles Irish emigrants and chaplains had to face and overcome. They were faced with discrimination, both direct and indirect: in the early decades, the overt discrimination signs bearing **NO Blacks, No Dogs, NO Irish**, until outlawed by equality legislation, a brief hiatus before they were hampered by a different stereotype brought as a result of the various bombing campaigns, the Irish as terrorist, to quote a song by Paul Brady: 'In their eyes we're nothing but a bunch of murderers', during decades marked by the Prevention of Terrorism Act. This year as I travelled through various Irish centres in Britain I was met with the refrain, by seasoned campaigners: 'Its cool to be Irish now'. So, this is a story of a journey from the outlawed, the marginalised Paddies', the murderers to the cool Diaspora. The story unfolding in the IECE archives is one of determination, struggle, and heartache but peppered with victory. Tonge states 'whilst the Catholic Church would claim that its primary roles are spiritual and pastoral, it has sometimes been seen as performing a political role' (2002, 105). This too is apparent in the archives. The Irish Chaplaincy undoubtedly influenced social policy in Ireland and Britain. Examples from the archives show its important role in many areas, a few of which I will focus on today. It stands out for its consistent efforts to increase the visibility of emigrants through research and lobbying for their inclusion in official statistics in both Ireland and Britain; its consistent pressure on the Irish government to take responsibility for Irish emigrants and to provide core funding for emigrants services. It made a major contribution in several substantive areas, including: housing; welfare services and work with prisoners and their families. What is important in analysing the influence of the Irish Chaplaincy on

social policy is not only what they did, but very significantly, how they went about their work, their strategic planning, networking and continuous research and evaluation. O' Donnell and Thomas describe the policy process as 'a continuous circle, involving policy-making, and implementation and monitoring. There should be no sense of hierarchy in approaching these three. Indeed, if anything, implementation and monitoring are more important, since they are not adequately handled at present (140). The Irish Chaplaincy has since its inception in 1957 embraced all three.

### **The Task Force Report**

The greatest acknowledgment of the work of the Irish Chaplaincy is perhaps that presented in the Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants, which states:

'The commitment in the PPF (Programme for Prosperity and Fairness) was based on a recommendation in a Report commissioned by the Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants and the Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas in 1999. The Harvey Report assessed the current pattern of Irish emigration; reviewed the policy responses and services provided by the Government, the Catholic Church and other voluntary organisations; and set out the main policy challenges that would arise over the ten year period ahead. It concluded that there was need for a government commitment to a partnership approach to the subject of emigration and to the development of a coherent and effective policy, funding and service infrastructure. The Report recommended that the government "establish a time-limited Task Force, coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and involving Government Departments, State Agencies and NGOs to develop a coherent long-term policy approach to emigration and the needs of emigrants' (11).

The policy recommendations of the report reflected the work done by the Irish Chaplaincy since its inception. Policy objectives:

- Ensure, as far as possible that Irish people who emigrate do so voluntarily and on the basis of informed choice, and are properly prepared to live independently in different societies.
- Protect and support the Irish Abroad, particularly those who emigrate involuntarily and those who find themselves marginalised or at risk of social exclusion

- Facilitate the return to Ireland and reintegration into Irish society of emigrants who wish to do so, especially the vulnerable and the elderly.
- Support the Irish Abroad who wishes to express and share the Irish dimension of their identity.

Its action plan to meet these objectives incorporates 3 main areas:

- Pre-departure services
- Service to the Irish Abroad
- Service to returning emigrants

These are all areas where the Irish Chaplaincy has developed services. In its section on structures and resources, it provides the solution the Irish Chaplaincy had sought for decades:

- The allocation to the Department of Foreign Affairs of overall responsibility for policy on emigration and for the coordination of support services to emigrants and Irish communities abroad.
- The establishment of a new structure-the Agency for the Irish Abroad- under the aegis of the Department for Foreign Affairs to coordinate the provision of services for Irish emigrants and Irish communities abroad.
- The appointment of additional staff in the Department of Foreign Affairs, at home and at certain Missions overseas, to support the Irish abroad
- The allocation of additional resources to other departments providing services to Irish emigrants to enable them improve and develop these services.
- A significant increase in the level of official funding for emigrant services. A figure of €18 million is proposed for 2003 building to €34 in 2005.

It is stated in the report that:

‘The Chaplaincy Scheme operated by the Catholic Church in Ireland has played a central role in supporting welfare service for the Irish in many countries, notably Britain and the US. A similar scheme is urgently being established in Australia. The Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants which coordinates the work of the chaplains remains one of the mainstays of the support services for emigrants at home and abroad. However, the capacity of the Catholic Church in Ireland to provide chaplains and leaders is diminishing as a result of the decline in vocations and increasingly, the services they provide are being taken over by lay people.’ Ireland

and the Irish Abroad (2002) acknowledge the changing economic and social developments that took place in Ireland and in particular the new and inclusive definition of the Irish Nation in Article 2 of the Irish Constitution as a result of the Good Friday Agreement. The report suggest that this provides a new context in which to view the phenomenon of Irish emigration and an opportunity to put in place a new approach to meeting the needs of Irish emigrants. The Task Force on Policy Regarding Emigrants was established by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in December 2001 in fulfilment of an undertaking in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) to ‘address the special needs of those Irish emigrants abroad who are particularly marginalised or at greatest risk of exclusion’.

Reading the Task Force Report one does not get a feeling of the long decades of lobbying that was undertaken by the Irish Chaplains, prior to its publication. It was a long and sustained campaign. However, this is just the latest instalment in a long struggle for change. Let us go back now to its beginnings.

### **The Early Years**

O’Shea in his history of the first twenty-five years of the Irish chaplaincy writes of how between 1951 and 1961 ‘...the floodgates were opened’ (1985:9) . Four out of five Irish people born in the Thirties emigrated in the Fifties. They were mostly young and single and 80% had left school before the age of 15 (10). In stark contrast to the poverty of Fifties Ireland, Britain offered the attraction of the post war boom, and Beveridge’s welfare model led to the building of houses, motorways, power stations, hospitals, and a demand for labourers, nurses, domestic personnel and hotel workers. In 1942 Catholic Social Welfare Bureau had been set up in Dublin by Archbishop John Charles McQuaid to help emigrants before they left Ireland, especially advice in relation to employment, accommodation and religious practice (O’Shea, 12). In 1948, 70 Irish priests from three dioceses of London met in Westminster Cathedral Hall to discuss how to assist Irish emigrants. This led to a proposal by Fr Woods to establish an Irish centre. Fr Lionel Shiel S.J. travelled through Britain 1948-1949 . He visited oil refineries, steel works and camps for beet workers. He identified problems in relation to attending Mass and practising religion. With other priest including Fr Robert L Stevenson, also a Jesuit and others he decided that a mission for the Irish in Britain should be organised. These missions were conducted in timber huts attached

to construction sites and also in some parishes in Westminster. In 1953 at the instigation of Archbishop McQuaid the Episcopal Committee for Emigrants was set up. The Committee included Archbishop Walsh of Tuam, Bishop Moynihan of Kerry, Bishop Staunton of Ferns and Bishop MacNeely of Raphoe. It was to be a liaison committee with the hierarchy of England and Wales. In 1954 they discussed a letter from Fr Shiel on the problem of emigrants in England and reports from Hubert Daly a member of the Legion of Mary from Westmeath who had been sent to England and Wales by Frank Duff where he researched the religious situation of emigrants. His weekly reports were forwarded to Archbishop McQuaid. On the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1955, two proposals by McQuaid were adopted by the Standing Committee of the Irish Hierarchy:

1. Fr Aedan McGrath , a Columban priest, should be authorised with consent from his Superior General to go to England and Wales to foster the Legion of Mary among Irish emigrants and to instil in them an apostolic spirit
2. That the provincials of the religious fathers who gave missions in Ireland be requested to send those Fathers to give missions to the Irish in England. The Bishop of Ferns, in the House of Missions in Enniscorthy with an executive of Diocesan priests experienced in this work be asked to co-ordinate and develop the entire mission so as to cover all centres and camps where there were settlements of Irish men and women.

Archbishop McQuaid wrote to Cardinal Griffin of Westminster outlining proposals and seeking support. The aim was to set up an advice centre for Irish. In 1954 Cardinal Griffin had given financial support towards the purchase of two houses at Hornsey Lane Gardens, North London, which were converted into a hostel for 40 girls. He gave full backing to the proposed Irish Centre at Camden Square and appointed Fr Thomas McNamara as resident chaplain and director. It was established in 1955. It was to provide hostels with Chaplains, canteens, library facilities, living rooms, residential accommodation in a Christian atmosphere. It was to provide for the spiritual and moral welfare of poor or homeless workers, to relieve poverty, sickness and distress and run a social club, and to provide amenities for social recreation and sport in a Christian atmosphere. The Irish Centre had links but was totally

independent of the Irish Chaplaincy Scheme. It has had chaplains from Oblate fathers, as has the Irish Welfare Centre in Birmingham.

In 1955, Fr Aedan McGrath who had worked as Head of Legion of Mary in China, until expelled in 1954, went to England, with the full support of Cardinal Griffin. On Trinity Sunday 1955 Cardinal Griffin spoke on the Irish in London. July 1955, Irish Hierarchy issued its own pastoral letter thanking the English and Welsh hierarchies. Initially Fr McGrath stayed in a presbytery but when Frs Ronan and Casey joined him they moved to a flat in Holland park In the following year, Fr Reilly joined them to replace Fr Ronan who had returned to Ireland. Their work was to involve Irish emigrants in apostolic work and so integrate them into the parish structure. This was done through the Legion of Mary and the Patrician Movement. This work linked the various Chaplaincy schemes together. Outreach work and integration were important goals of the Chaplaincy from the very beginning. They travelled around England and Wales setting up new presidia and strengthening existing ones. Their members met emigrants off the boat trains.

In February 1955 Archbishop McQuaid met the Provincials of various religious orders in Ireland. A committee of priests with experience of mission work was formed to advise the Episcopal Liaison Committee to ensure more effectiveness in the future. During 1955 and 1956 missions were given in various parts of Britain. The necessity for permanent missions emerged. In 1956 Archbishop McQuaid met the Columban Fathers Superior and Fr Edward McElroy. As a result Fr McElroy and Fr Casey went to England in November 1956 to survey the camps. While local priests said mass in the camps they were unable to give pastoral care. Fr McElroy suggested that a priest should be located on a permanent basis on the camps and suggested the same to Archbishop McQuaid in January 1957. In the same month Archbishop McQuaid proposed to the Standing Committee of the Irish Hierarchy that this should be done and with the Bishops approval, 'The Camp Chaplain Scheme' was inaugurated. Archbishop McQuaid wrote to Archbishop William Godfrey of Westminster that the proposed scheme should be directed by Fr McElroy but subject to the bishops of England and Wales. At the June Hierarchy meeting in Maynooth the Bishops pledged nine priests to work in camps and also amongst those working in London hotels. There are excellent Radharc documentaries, which show this work. In

them can be seen priests and members of the Legion of Mary meeting the mail boat at dawn in Euston station, priest having tea with the young Irish women working in the hotels around Bayswater and the work of the camp Chaplain in Oldbury Power station. Their drive and enthusiasm is palpable. 30, Ovington Square became the HQ when a Miss Helen McHugh bought the house and donated it to the Columbans in 1957. The first chaplain was Fr Domhnall Ó Scanaill, followed by Fr Paul Bolan. Many Irish were employed in hotels and catering, hospitals and building motorways. Work on the M1 began in 1958 and on the M6 began in 1968. July 1958 priests were appointed to parishes. They were concerned with integration and belonging.

### **Housing**

One of the major substantive areas in which the Irish Chaplaincy has had a far-reaching influence on social policy is in the area of housing provision and policy and this was pioneered by Eamonn Casey in Slough. . In September 1960 Eamonn Casey was appointed Chaplain to St Ethelbert's parish in Slough. It was a large industrial town, with over 30 factories , large council estates a population of more than 100,000. Of the 15-16,000 Catholics about 12,000 Irish. Eamonn Casey was no stranger to emigrant issues. While a priest in St John's Parish in Limerick he was aware that four fifths of men in his own parish had emigrated. He travelled to Britain twice a year to reach out to these parishioners. In a Radharc documentary made of his work he explained how when he moved there, 'I moved around among them for months to find out' what could be done to solve the difficulties of the Irish in Slough. He recognised inadequate housing as a major problem. He spoke of the thousands of families in caravans who had given up hope and had 'staked out pathetic little gardens'. He recognised that many had given up hope of homes, families, having children, and reunification with their families. He realised that if you got £200 you could buy a home. This amount was the difference between appalling conditions and a 'normal' life. He found out if this could be possible. People had a difficulty not with repayment but getting money for a deposit. I interviewed him recently and he laughed at his own enthusiasm and innocence when he walked into a bank in Slough and in forty minutes, standing at the counter, convinced the bank manager to back his scheme. He encouraged people to save systematically. He set up his own Parish Savings Scheme. A facility he opened until late on Friday evening to facilitate the late return of those men working outside of Slough on the motorways and other building

projects. They gave Eamonn Casey money, which he put, in the bank. Once they had saved 50 pounds, 80% of it was put in a building society. This helped build up the reputation for the individual to save with both bank and building society. Fr Casey bought a house and divided it into eight flats with the support of Father Mossey and a loan from the Catholic Housing Aid Society. This was reserved for young married couples expecting their first child. The couple paid a weekly rent part of which was lodged in an account in their name in a savings bank so that they could raise enough to qualify for assistance in acquiring a deposit to buy their own home. By Sept 1963 there were 26 such units. These services, initially established for the Irish were available to all. He also set up an Advisory Scheme. He recognised the difficulty of many people who had potential to solve their own housing problem but did not know how. He gave an example of a couple with four children who had been put into care, because they had no lodgings and 'Didn't know the machinery'. He said they 'had to educate people as to what they were capable of'. He recognised their apprehension rather than fear. He saw how they were not used to banks, solicitors, etc. They had saved but not in the proper way. They trusted the post office, were unsure about banks and didn't realize that in order to buy a home one needed to save with a building society and bank to establish stability and saving capacity. Later on Fr Paul Byrne was to advise many young couples on housing issues when they attended pre-marital courses in London.

### **Housing Aid Society**

In 1963 Fr Casey moved to London as National Director of Catholic Housing Association. His first task was to develop as many branches as possible in England, Scotland and Wales. He believed that the housing problem could best be developed at local level. He produced a pamphlet *Housing-a parish solution*. He drew on the expertise of a committee of professional people. This became the executive committee of the Catholic Housing Aid Society with Maisie Ward as President. At the same time he set up a major centre for the Greater London Area at Cumberland Place. He made available to the homeless the schemes he had already pioneered at Slough. He processed 150 applications in the first year. The BBC made a documentary on its work. Its impact was immediate (O'Shea) and led to these schemes being adopted as statutory services for the homeless and are known as Housing Advice Centres. This is just one example of how the Chaplaincy scheme influenced policy in Britain.

In 1964 new schemes developed. There was a Fatherless Families Scheme for unsupported mothers, a maisonette scheme, and an Out of London Scheme. The latter involved finding employment in areas where housing was cheaper. In many areas the Chaplaincy helped to run the local branch of CHAS. In 1966 Shelter was established. It aimed to articulate the needs of the homeless and put pressure on Government and local housing authorities to tackle housing problem. This lobbying has always been a strong feature of the work of the Irish Chaplaincy. Shelter to raised funds to enable voluntary housing associations do more to increase the amount of rented housing available to poorer families. Eamonn Casey became Bishop of Kerry in 1969 and left London. As Chairman and founding member of Shelter he made an arrangement with Shelter which led to the foundation of Shelter Housing Aid Centre (SHAC). The first Director was Fr Paul Byrne OMI who had been Director of CHAS in Birmingham.

Other initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s were influential for example, the development of an employment agency and later the introduction of a social work service.

### **New initiatives**

Marian Employment Agency started by Eamonn Casey in 1963. This was in response to requests from priests dissatisfied with employment placement. (O'Shea, 47). An office was opened in Quex Road, Kilburn in 1963. In 1964 a branch office was opened in the Irish Centre. It gave pre-emigration advice. It was concerned with responsible emigration when emigration was necessary (O'Shea, 47). It was non-profit. Employers paid introductory fees for certain categories of people. In the late 1960s it was dealing with 3000 applications annually. It closed in 1975 as emigration had declined during the 1970s and the Agency was in debt. O'Shea (1985, 48) argues that 1965 was a crisis year for the Emigrant Chaplaincy Scheme. There were only 13 priests involved. A few months later, only seven or eight priests. The Hierarchy turned to the religious orders and received a great response. At the request of the archbishops of Dublin, Westminster and Birmingham the Irish provincials of the religious orders made 28 priests available to the Chaplaincy Scheme. A good relationship between secular and religious priests was established. In the 1970s it was viewed that emigrants were also fleeing social and personal issues by coming to

England. In 1967 two Augustinians, Leahy and Fogerty were appointed to the chaplaincy team to cater for the needs of the Irish in west London. Shortly afterwards Leahy was replaced by Lawlor and was involved in visiting lodging houses, pubs, dance halls, building sites. It was recognised that there was a need for a new service to deal with problems they encountered; a social work service. Fr Paul Byrne approached the Provincial Sisters of Charity in 1970. Sister Alice Mooney arrived in mid-October. A disused room in the basement of Hammersmith Priory was converted into an office. It had facilities for interviewing in the front parlour. Between 1971 and 1972 a separate premises was built with a grant from the IECE. This was the beginning of the Irish welfare Bureau in Hammersmith. In its first year it dealt with 511 people. By 1992 this had risen to 5,488.

The 1980s brought more challenges for the Irish Chaplaincy. Long-term unemployment and a new wave of emigration together with a rise in neo-liberal policies and a renewal of political unrest made this a very challenging period for the Irish Chaplaincy. Support and leadership was on hand from the Bishops. The courage and strength can be seen in the homily delivered by the Most Rev Seamus Hegarty Bishop of Raphoe in Westminster Cathedral march 17<sup>th</sup> 1985.

‘while I encourage you to do all that is good, all that is noble’ as St Paul says and state clearly that it is your duty to do so, I would also have to state clearly that the indigenous community of the host country and its Government in particular have a responsibility to ensure that an ethnic grouping is accommodated and protected in expressing its traditions and sense of identity provided it is done so legitimately and ultimately in the best interests of the common good. Governments no less than individuals have their obligations in justice and charity. Not only must a government act with impartiality in its treatment of migrants. It must also be seen to do so. As a measure of its intent it should be particularly sensitive in defending civil rights, freedom of movement of peace loving citizens and be prepared to review and repeal any law and eliminate any measure executive or legislative which might appear to a reasonable man to be discriminating and infringing human rights’.

You are as acutely aware as I am that some of our countrymen resort to violence and to measures which cannot be condoned and which must be clearly and unequivocally

condemned. This is most tragically apparent in Northern Ireland. The effects however are all too apparent in mainland Britain and in the Republic of Ireland to such an extent, the social, psychological or political victims of the campaign of violence.

Those who resort to bombing, maiming, destruction of property to pursue objectives in the name of Republicanism do untold damage to the name of peace and do not represent the view of the vast majority of Irish people. Neither can such activities be reconciled with the teaching of the Gospel.

What is urgently needed today is a meaningful political initiative of imagination and enterprising kind- which carefully notes but which is not enslaved by history- which will chart a realistic course of reconciliation and understanding between our two countries. Such an initiative far from being a betrayal of the past would be an enlightened and overdue response to an increasingly worsening situation. Such an initiative would place the future security and destiny of our people in the hands of those democratically elected to govern us and would help to eliminate the need of self appointed 'protectors' who have no democratic mandate. I invite all of you to exercise your franchise and your individual and collective influence to approach your elected representatives at all levels to work towards the formulation and implementation of such an initiative. Your collective voice orchestrated legitimately and constructively could well prove to be the impetus which is needed at present. Any progress made by such representation to expedite a political solution would cast you in the role of peacemaker- and peacemakers are specially commended by Christ in the Beatitudes. The alternative has been going on for too long.

What is of immediate concern to me and I am certain to you is that in some way you vicariously are made to share in the guilt of the extremists and that you are looked upon in that light to such an extent that it inhibits your self-expression or prevents your social activities, your business pursuits, or even your freedom to congregate or associate for perfectly legitimate and laudable reasons. I do have grounds for optimism that a more discerning and judicious application of special measures has already begun. Nobody will challenge the wisdom much less the necessity of devising methods of coping with terrorists. Equally, no reasonable man could condone the harassing or the detaining of innocent civilians.

The IECE wishes to express its solidarity and its pastoral concern for you the members of the Irish Community in Britain. At a recent meeting of the Episcopal Conference in Maynooth it was clearly established that the Emigrant Apostolate is an integral part of the Irish Church's mission today. Working closely with the Bishop and priests of Westminster and elsewhere in Great Britain we are keen to make additional resources of personnel available to you to help you to do two things:

- (a) to enable you to give witness to the Faith preached by St Patrick- a faith founded and based on Christ and on the Gospel and no other. We encourage you to live that faith in all aspects of your lives drawing support and help from the Sacraments, from the Word of God and from your personal and family prayer.
- (b)** We see you the Irish Community in Britain as a bridge or as mediators in working for peace and understanding between our two communities particularly in Northern Ireland. Basic to any resolution of this problem is a better understanding between the two Ireland communities. Because of your common bond based on your Catholic Faith you have a unique base from which to initiate and give a lead in forming this better understanding. This is part of your mission, of your witness to the faith, of your responsibility as followers of Christ. Do not be deflected from this objective. I am confident that such an initiative would elicit a positive and a constructive response from the people of this island.

On this important day we pray for peace, harmony and understanding in our native country. We pray for a continued allegiance and loyalty to our faith. We pray for unity, happiness and love in our families and in our homes. Lastly, I commend to your prayers all those in positions of leadership, civil and ecclesiastical, that we will have the vision and discernment we need to serve our people in their best interests and the courage to take initiatives which will reflect a proper hierarchy of values. Your prayers and your sacrifices will be invaluable help in making this possible.