



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMS FROM THE DIOCESE OF DERRY
IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Thursday, 13 April 1989

Dear Bishop Daly,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Faithful People of Derry.

I am very happy to have this occasion to greet all of you during your diocesan pilgrimage to Rome, and at the same time to express my esteem and prayerful support for you, your families and your loved ones – for all the children of Saint Colmcille in the Diocese of Derry.

The people of Northern Ireland are very often in my thoughts and prayers. It is always deeply saddening to hear of continuing violence in a land whose missionaries have brought the message of Christ, the Prince of Peace, to so many other peoples. We must not lose hope that those responsible on every side will recognize that the only path to true justice is the path of reconciliation, dialogue and non-violence. Together with your Bishops, priests and all Irish people of good will, I offer my heartfelt prayers for an end to the tragic violence which has been so much a part of your lives over the past twenty years.

Your strong faith and your love of God go back to Saint Patrick and Saint Colmcille. I am told that your city is often called “*Doire Choilmchille*”, Saint Colmcille, also known as “Columba” – the “dove” of the Church – is so-called because of the long hours he spent in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. I encourage you today to remain steadfast in prayer in your homes and in your churches.

Through the intercession of your great Patron, may peace and justice flourish once more throughout the whole of Ireland. May her children grow up in freedom without hatred in their

hearts. May Saint Colmcille inspire the young people of your towns and countryside to take up the personal challenge of peace and brotherhood, and to learn the importance of mutual acceptance and loving forgiveness.

May our Lady of Knock, Queen of Peace, spread her mantle of peace over the whole land.

God Bless Derry!

Beannacht Dé oraibh go léir!

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