



Mr I M Burns
Deputy Secretary
NIO(L)



BRITISH EMBASSY,
DUBLIN.
28 February 1990



1. cc. *Mr. K. Bloomfield*
Mr Thomas
Mr Blackwell.
2. *fh:*

Dear Ian,

2/3

THE HOLY SEE AND VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Papers on this subject rest with your minute of 7 February to Brian Blackwell and Timothy George's comment of 16 February.

2. We took the opportunity of your visit to Dublin on other business to call together on the Papal Nuncio this morning. I said that I had been reflecting on our conversation last November and had discussed it privately with you. Since you happened to be in Dublin I thought it might be useful for you and the Archbishop to meet. Gerada expressed gratification. He was still keen to establish whether there was anything that the Catholic Church could do to stop the bloodshed in Northern Ireland.

3. You briefed him in general terms about recent developments in Northern Ireland: good government, fair employment and education: protection of the citizen against terrorism; and the prospects for political development. We had not got very far in identifying specific new action which the Church might take. Your first thought was that the Church should give every possible support to Bishops Cahal and Edward Daly. The Nuncio thinks highly of Cahal Daly and was clearly pleased by this approach. In subsequent conversation you distinguished between the consistently humane, enlightened and compassionate line taken by Cahal Daly and the less helpful attitude of Cardinal O'Fiaich on the one hand and Father Des Wilson on the other. Archbishop Gerada commented under his breath that Cahal Daly was a leader of men: unfortunately Tom O'Fiaich was not. He asked questions about the reputation in Northern Ireland of Father Murray and Father Paul.

4. The Nuncio explained the genesis of liberation theology in terms of an oversight by the Papacy: they simply had not

understood/

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understood at the time the way in which some of The Pope's declarations could be misused to justify violence. We said that we understood the difficulties which the Papacy had with liberation theology even in Latin American dictatorships: there could be no possible justification for violence in Northern Ireland where the democratic liberties of the citizens were guaranteed. Gerada concurred.

5. You suggested that any new message from Rome might be couched not simply as a new denunciation of violence since the terrorists were unlikely to listen: but in terms of constructive support for the 90% of Catholics who abjured violence - sometimes at some risk to themselves and their families - and who built their lives within the democratic process. The Nuncio is going to Rome in the middle of May. (He hopes to celebrate mass with The Pope on 18 May which is the birthday of both men). He expects to leave Dublin about 12 May. We agreed that we would all reflect further and that you would take an opportunity to call on him again before his departure.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nick', with a horizontal line underneath.

Nicholas Fenn

cc

Mr T J B George
RID
FCO

Mr Oliver Miles CMG
Secretariat
Belfast

Mr J K E Broadley CMG
Holy See

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2. Mr. Spence
3. Bot 2.

FROM I M BURNS
DUS(L)
28 February 1990

DUSL/MR/14962



cc PS/PUS (L&B) - B
PS/Sir K Bloomfield - B
Mr Miles - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr George, FCO - B

MR BLACKWELL

THE HOLY SEE AND VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

This is just to record the fact that I spent an hour this morning with Archbishop Gerada, the Papal Nuncio in Dublin, following up the line of approach which you had suggested with your minute of 5 February (and supported subsequently by Sir Kenneth Bloomfield). Sir Nicholas Fenn was with me, and will be reporting more fully on the conversation, but you will wish to know that the Nuncio was receptive to the idea that there should be some sort of Papal message, and that he and I have both agreed to reflect further on this, with a view to meeting again at the beginning of May, prior to his next visit to Rome, which will be in the middle of May.

2. One of the things we now need to think about is how best to start covering the same territory with Cardinal Hume and/or Archbishop Barbarito: there is also the question of whether we should at any stage say anything to Cardinal O'Fiaich, who is sure to be consulted if this comes to anything. When you have the Ambassador's record of this morning's meeting, I would be grateful if SIL, in conjunction with PAB, would give some thought to these questions.

SIGNED:

I M BURNS
DUS(L)
28 February 1990

Ext: OAB.6447

CONFIDENTIAL

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HCS/2/41
 FROM SIR KENNETH BLOOMFIELD
 DATE 12 February 1990

cc. PS/PUS B&L - B
 Mr Miles - B
 Mr Thomas - B
 Mr A Wilson - B
 Mr Kirk - B
 Mr Bell - B
 Mr Blackwell - B
 Mr J McConnell
 Mr Daniell - B
 Mr George FCO - B
 HM Ambassador Dublin
 Dr K Donnelly - B
 Mr Hallett - B

Mr Burns - B

THE HOLY SEE AND VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. I was grateful to Mr Blackwell for copying to me his minute of 5 February and the attached draft paper.
2. It seems to me inconceivable that we should do other than give the utmost encouragement to the excellent intentions of Archbishop Gerada. We have not always been able to expect such a sympathetic line from the Nunciature.
3. I am sure it is realistic to rule out excommunication as any kind of practical goal. A Papal statement read from the pulpits throughout Ireland could have a useful impact on the moral ditherers, if not on the "hard men". The natural presentation, surely, would be to link such a message directly back to the words the Pope used during his own visit to Ireland, on the lines that "murder is murder". It is important to establish that something can be a "political crime" (or at least claimed to be so by its perpetrators) but also a moral crime or, in theological terms, a sin.
4. I hope some efforts will be made to link Cardinal Hume into all this. One has the impression that he has high moral standing in the Vatican, whereas on past experience I fear that any advice given by Cardinal O'Fiaich is likely to be ambiguous at best.

KPB

K P BLOOMFIELD

CONFIDENTIAL

ID 13112

CONFIDENTIAL



PAL/5900/TW/RN

FROM: J E MCCONNELL, PAB
DATE: 7 FEBRUARY 1990

B A Blackwell - B
(SIL)

1 cc PS/Sir K Bloomfield - B
Mr Burns - B
Mr Miles - B 2
Mr Thomas - B
Mr A P Wilson - B
Mr Kirk - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Daniell - B
Mr George - B
HMA Dublin
Dr Donnelly - B
Mr Hallett - B

THE HOLY SEE AND VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for copying to me your minute and enclosures of 5 February to Ian Burns on the above. I have no further comments on the specifics of the draft and I support the two pronged objective of a Papal statement and the need for Archbishop Gerada to seek to influence the Church in Ireland to encourage more support for the security forces as well as channelling republican aspirations through the democratic rather than violent means.

As your paragraph 3 suggests there are hurdles to negotiate along the way and I assume one of these in the far distance will be how the timing of any statement in Ireland will be decided. The maximum possible response will, as I pointed out in my minute of 17 January, be dependent on any event on the streets close to the statement being made. I know that you appreciate all too well that a "PIRA" mistake or conversely another disputed incident involving the security forces would either strongly endorse any statement or perhaps weaken it significantly. Unfortunately whilst we have no real control over this it remains a point worth making in discussing tactics/handling with HMA Dublin.

(Signed T Watson for)

J E MCCONNELL
Political Affairs Division
Ext 238 SH
RN/4720

RESTRICTED



FROM: I M Burns
DUS(L)
7 February 1990
DUSL/MR/14456

cc PS/Sir K Bloomfield
Mr Miles
Mr Thomas
Mr A Wilson
Mr Kirk
Mr Bell
Mr J McConnell
Mr Daniell
Mr T George, RID, FCO
HMA Dublin

2. Mr. Spence

MR BLACKWELL

POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE HOLY SEE ABOUT VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your minute of 5 February. I agree with the substance of the draft paper which you enclose, namely that:

- (a) Excommunication of terrorists is not a realistic possibility (and is in any case riddled with problems of definition).
- (b) A renewed plea by the Catholic Church, especially if emanating from the Pope himself, could have valuable impact inside Northern Ireland and outside. Only to the most marginal extent would this be likely to produce the terrorists' enthusiasm for terrorism; but it might help to erode some of their less thinking support (particularly outside Northern Ireland) and, a point you do not mention in the paper, help to reassure those in Northern Ireland who are already showing courage in their opposition to terrorism.

2. I find myself wondering, however,

- (i) what is the strongest and most telling form of message which the Papacy might be willing to deliver,

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(ii) whether there is any other action which the Church in Dublin might take, going beyond the simple issuing of a single message: the Pope's message in 1980 was, after all, much more than a message - it was massively reinforced by the theatre of the Pope's own presence in Ireland.

I suspect that the best way of taking forward both these points is to talk them over with someone like Archbishop Gerada. He, after all, will have a clearer idea than we of the phrases and ideas that would appeal to the Vatican; and he will have a much better understanding than we of the ways in which we can ensure what is said or done is not merely a single message, but something of more lasting impact.

3. I am therefore inclined to think that the next step should not be to seek Ministerial clearance for a particular proposal, but rather to arrange for a more thorough discussion with the Archbishop, with a view to reporting the outcome to Ministers, and then seeking their approval for any cause of action that then emerges as realistic.

4. Before going any further, however, can I ask you to confirm that, presumably through RID, Mr Broadley was given an opportunity to make an input to the papers you put to me on 5 February?

5. Subject to that point, and subject to any views from yourself or from the FCO, I think the essence of my reply to Sir Nicholas Fenn is: Yes it is worth building on Archbishop Gerada's willingness to prompt action by the Catholic Church; we ourselves have only been able to come up with some fairly limited ideas as to what might be done; but we have reached the stage at which it would be worthwhile having a fuller conversation with Archbishop Gerada; can this be arranged, either when I am next

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in Dublin, or when the Archbishop is next in London (I recall that he has a brother in Peterborough whom he visits occasionally).

6. I have not forgotten Archbishop Barbarito: if there is a proposal to take forward, we shall clearly need to talk to him about it at least as much as to Archbishop Gerada. But let us first take a step forward with the Archbishop that raised the issue with us in the first place.

SIGNED

I M BURNS
DUS(L)
Ext OAB 6447
7 February 1990

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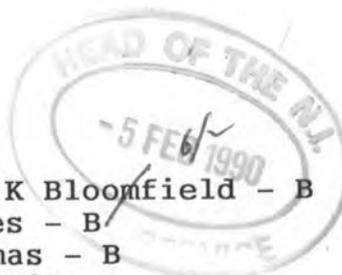
C O N F I D E N T I A L

130/2

B A BLACKWELL - SIL

Mr Burns -

1.
cc PS/Sir K Bloomfield - B
Mr Miles - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr A P Wilson - B
Mr Kirk - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr J McConnell - B
Mr Daniell - B
Mr George - RID FIO - B
HMA Dublin
Dr Donnelly
Mr Hallett



2. Mr. Spence

THE HOLY SEE AND VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. At last in response to your minute of 29 November, I attach a draft paper suggesting how we might respond to Archbishop Gerada's suggestion to Sir Nicholas Fenn that the Catholic Church might do more to bring an end to terrorism in Northern Ireland.

2. The draft paper incorporates helpful comments from Messrs George, Miles, McConnell and Dr Donnelly. We are unanimous in our view that the Church would not consider any form of excommunication, but that, nevertheless, a Papal statement in Ireland along the lines discussed in the paper could be helpful (and the paper introduces the thought that, with the cooperation of Barbarito, the statement might also be extended to the Catholic Church in Great Britain). It is also suggested that Gerada himself might seek to influence the Church in Ireland to encourage more support for the police and the Army and to encourage republicans to pursue their aspirations through the constitutional process rather than through violence.

3. Subject to your comments and those of copy recipients, there remains the issue of the handling of this paper. I assume that, if officials are content that it proposes a viable and desirable course of action, then we should seek NIO and FCO Ministers' approval for what we propose before discussing detailed tactics with Sir Nicholas Fenn. Is that how you see it?

(signed)

B A BLACKWELL
SIL DIVISION
5 February 1990

C O N F I D E N T I A L

SIL/14269/BAH

FR B A BLACKWELL
SIL DIVISION
3 JANUARY 1990

Mr J McConnell - B

cc Mr Miles - B
Mr A P Wilson - B
*Mr Bell - M
*Mr Daniell - M
Mr George - RID - B
Mr Donnelly
Mr Hallett
(*with papers)

THE HOLY SEE AND VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. You may dimly remember Mr Burns' minute to me of 29 November enclosing correspondence from Sir Nicholas Fenn about a recent meeting with the Papal Nuncio in Dublin. You will recall that Mr Burns had responded warmly to HMA's suggestion that we should give considered thought to the suggestion that the Catholic Church (ie, the Pope) might once again take some fresh step in seeking to diminish republican terrorism, or at least support for it. You will also recall - probably with a shudder - that in consultation with you, Timothy George, Peter Bell (if Mr Wilson agreed) and Jim Daniell (to whom, surprisingly, I now discover Mr Burns did not copy the papers) I was tasked to consider what imaginative proposal might be worked up.

2. Carrying forward that proposal has not been easy. Setting aside my scepticism about the effect of Papal condemnation on PIRA's hard-core activists and committed supporters, it has proved extremely difficult to come up with a proposal that is both practicable and would be effective.

3. It is therefore with more diffidence than usual that I attach the first draft of a paper (much of its Catholic slant having been contributed by Dr Donnelly since I am too long lapsed to claim an authentic Catholic view) on which I would welcome comment,

C O N F I D E N T I A L

re-drafting, new or further suggestions, even total condemnation. Mr Burns is beginning to fret about my tardy response to his original minute so could I ask for any contributions from you or copy recipients by Wednesday 17 January please.

[signed]

B A BLACKWELL
SIL DIVISION
3 JANUARY 1990
Ext OAB 6587

C O N F I D E N T I A L

WERH/SIL/14003

DE... and government to all the people of Northern Ireland, to
 reduce the sense of alienation of the nationalist community in the
 institutions of government in NI; and second, by emphasising the
 sinfulness of terrorist violence, to diminish any ambiguity in the
THE HOLY SEE AND VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND: terrorism vis a vis
 "liberation theology", in refute any claim by republicans to be
 fighting a "just war".

Background

1. At a meeting with HMA in Dublin, the Papal Nuncio
 Archbishop Gerada disclosed that he is contemplating advising the
 Papacy to make some new move to condemn the IRA. This paper
 considers what effective moves the Papacy might make which would
 have a significant impact on republican support for violence in
 Northern Ireland.

Effect of a Papal initiative

2. Ideally there should be two strands to any Papal
 initiative: one would be to underline the fundamental legitimacy
 and accountability of the institutions of an elected democracy
 such as the United Kingdom where the peaceful pursuit of
 aspirations and the redress of grievances can be achieved through
 the political process; and the other would be to emphasise the
 sinfulness of violence (including the thought that to kill for the
 cause of a United Ireland is indeed murder and, therefore, a
 mortal sin). The desired effects of such an initiative would be:
 first, by giving overt Papal support to the efforts of HMG to

bring good government to all the people of Northern Ireland, to reduce the sense of alienation of the nationalist community in the institutions of government in NI; and second, by emphasising the sinfulness of terrorist violence, to diminish any ambiguity in the Roman Catholic Church's position on republican terrorism vis a vis "liberation theology", ie refute any claim by republicans to be fighting a "just war".

Excommunication

3. Some critics of the Roman Catholic Church's position on republican violence during PIRA's present campaign have compared that position unfavourably with the 1920's when the use of such violence carried the threat of excommunication. There is no doubt that a number of Catholics opposed to the use of violence for political ends would welcome the use of this powerful instrument of the Church's authority against the Provisional IRA. But it is reported that the Catholic clergy in Northern Ireland see major difficulties with the use of excommunication against terrorists. The two main arguments used are:

- a. it would not have any effect on the hard-core terrorists perpetrating acts of violence and would thus diminish the Church's authority; and
- b. to refuse dead terrorists a Catholic burial would be to make unjustifiable assumptions about their state of mind at the moment of death.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

While these arguments may seem somewhat insubstantial, they may conceal deeper fears. There may be a fear of dissent and recrimination within the Church in Ireland and in the diaspora. There may also be a fear that not everything that has been and is being done by the State to combat terrorism is morally irreproachable and it would therefore be hypocritical in effect to penalise only the sinful behaviour of one side in what to some in the Catholic community is seen as a "dirty war". There is the further consideration that 20 years of terror in the Province has generated a marked degree of ambivalence among the Catholic community towards violence. It has become a part of daily life, and unfortunately ordinary Catholics are becoming more and more resigned to this with no real prospect of its ending. The outcome of this is likely to be that use of the power of excommunication would have little long term effect even on ordinary Catholics exacerbating its lack of effect on hard core terrorists. This, in a sense, would represent a double diminution of the Church's authority.

5. It is, therefore, unlikely that Archbishop Gerada would make much progress with the Vatican (who would undoubtedly consult the Irish hierarchy) if he were to advocate excommunication for Catholics perpetrating acts of terrorism in Northern Ireland. There would be even greater difficulties over excommunication for one "class" of terrorist - those convicted by the courts - as suggested by Sir Nicholas Fenn; this would raise arguments about the channels by which such convictions were obtained, and would

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WERH/SIL/14003

also imply the ethically curious position that an active terrorist could happily remain a full communicant of the Church provided he was never caught.

An alternative to excommunication

6. A feasible alternative to a decree of excommunication would be some form of statement carrying full Papal authority and containing the two strands described in paragraph 2 above. The question then arises as to whether the statement should also carry the overt backing of the Irish hierarchy or whether it should be solely a Papal statement implying that since it bore his authority, the hierarchy were obliged to acknowledge it. It would be unlikely that the Cardinal and some of the Southern hierarchy could be signed up to any meaningful statement which accorded legitimacy to the institutions of HMG in Northern Ireland even if expressed in the most general terms. It might even be difficult to obtain consent to a condemnation of violence which could not be interpreted as much as a condemnation of "state violence" as of terrorist violence.

7. The most effective means, therefore, of producing a statement which is both supportive of HMG's policies in Northern Ireland and unequivocally condemnatory of terrorist violence is likely to be a Papal statement issued from the Vatican to be read out from the pulpits at all masses in all Catholic churches in Ireland [and in Great Britain] on some appropriate Sunday during 1990.

actions within Ireland itself by Archbishop Gerada

8. Consideration should also be given as to whether Archbishop Gerada could take action himself within Ireland. Although the Archbishop said he was thinking of advising the Holy See to take some action, he introduced his remark more generally by "wondering aloud whether the Catholic Church could do more to help". On the assumption that Gerada is in a position to exercise a certain amount of influence - to put it at its lowest - on the Catholic Bishops and clergy, it may be that in this way he could do as much valuable work as by addressing himself to the Pope.

9. There seem to be two ways in which the Archbishop's personal influence with the Irish Bishops and clergy would be helpful. The first is that of the recruitment of Catholics into the Police Authority and into the security forces. We could reasonably put it to Gerada that we want security forces more representative of the whole community, and that therefore we badly need more Catholic recruits into the RUC (and even, if possible, the UDR, given that it will continue to exist for the foreseeable future). We could point out that the attitudes of the Irish Government and the SDLP are not very helpful. The Church, other than Bishop Cahal Daly, (in the Irish Times on 23 August, for instance, extract attached at Annex A) has not pronounced in recent times. It would be helpful if Bishop Daly's message could be repeated and taken up more generally by the Irish hierarchy. We might also suggest that the Church might find other ways to

shows support of the police and the Army (eg offers of attendance by a Catholic Bishop at the funerals of murdered soldiers or policemen).

10. The second way would be for Gerada to influence the Irish Catholic Bishops and clergy to play a more active role in republican circles in seeking to persuade those who are presently tempted to support republican violence that other forms of constitutional political activity are open to them which could be more fruitful as well as not sinful.

Recommendation

Conclusions

11. The authoritative views of the Papacy on republican terrorism would be likely still to have an impact on Roman Catholic opinion in Ireland, North and South. What is desirable is a papal statement that is both supportive of the accountable institutions of elected democracies such as the UK, and also unambiguously condemnatory of the sinfulness of terrorist violence (by means of which to kill is murder - a mortal sin). It is unlikely that the Irish hierarchy or the diaspora could be persuaded overtly to add their support to such a statement. Therefore, if the Pope could be persuaded to put his seal on such a statement, the most effective means of transmitting it would be to require the Irish [and British] hierarchies to provide for the Papal statement to be read from the pulpits of all Catholic churches at all masses on an appropriate Sunday during 1990.

12. In addition to seeking to influence the Papacy, it is likely that Archbishop Gerada could exert some influence on the Irish Catholic Bishops and clergy. We should seek to persuade him to influence the Bishops and clergy in Ireland to be overtly supportive of Catholic recruitment to the security forces (and to PANI) and to show more general understanding of their thankless task. He could also exhort the Bishops and clergy to do more in republican circles to encourage pursuit of aspirations through the constitutional political process than through the use of violence.

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that Archbishop Gerada be approached discreetly by HMA Dublin. It would be possible to open any such discussion by pointing out that to any reasonable person, Northern Ireland could not qualify - in terms of Liberation Theology - as one of those "extreme cases" where armed struggle might be admitted as a last resort "to put an end to an obvious and prolonged tyranny"; particularly as there is full democratic choice both over representation and, ultimately, over the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. This would lead naturally into the need for the Church to emphasise both the availability of democratic choice for all the people of Northern Ireland and the consequent sinfulness of violence in such circumstances. It would also be important to emphasise the malign effect of violence on the material life of the people of Northern Ireland, particularly on working class Catholics and Protestants. The Ambassador might then suggest that, if it were possible, a

ANNEX A

Papa statement along the lines indicated issued to the Irish [and with Archbishop Barbarito's support, the British] hierarchies for dissemination at masses on an appropriate Sunday would be helpful in detaching Catholic support from the Provisional IRA and would enhance the position of constitutional Catholic politicians.

14. HMA in Dublin should also explore with Archbishop Gerada how he might helpfully seek to influence the actions of the Catholic Bishops and clergy in Ireland to support the security forces and to recommend the political process to republicans in preference to the use of violence.

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
FEBRUARY 1990

Would you consider the decision...
...of your Church to...
...the SUC a laudable action?
...would you endorse it?
...Without qualification, I...
...certainly would endorse a...
...Catholic's decision to join the...
...SUC...
...So Catholics should be prepared...
...in your view, to join the...
...security forces...
...They should, and I think that, if...
...we are to have an acceptable...
...police force, the religious...
...balance within that police force...
...must reflect the balance in the...
...community as a whole.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Mr Miller

The fact that the political difficulties, special,

EXTRACT FROM IRISH TIMES ON 23 AUGUST 1989

tain to all these matters denies this - the

Millar

Would you consider the decision by a member of your Church to join the RUC a laudable action? Would you endorse it?

Dr Daly

Without qualification. I have to certainly would endorse a Catholic's decision to join the RUC. difficulties and dangers faced by Catholics who join the police

Mr Millar

So Catholics should be prepared, in your view, to join the public security forces. see policing as a legitimate form of service to the

Dr Daly

They should, and I think that, if we are to have an acceptable police force, the religious balance within that police force must reflect the balance in the community as a whole. cause of IRA activity, would be out of bounds for a Catholic member of the police force.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Mr Millar

The fact that the political difficulties, special all sorts of difficulties, that pertain to all these matters denies this - the kind of religious balance you would seek - should not this be regarded as justification or an excuse not to join in? police force.

Dr Daly

Quite right, but I would have to have great respect and great awareness of the enormous difficulties and dangers faced by Catholics who join the police force. Many of them do. They do so in a real desire for public service. They see policing as a legitimate form of service to the total community. The price of doing so will often be to put their own lives on the line. It almost certainly will mean their leaving certain Catholic areas, for some of these, because of IRA activity, would be out of bounds for a Catholic member of the police force.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

C O N F I D E N T I A L

That's going to be an upheaval that going to create all sorts of pressures and difficulties for himself or herself as a person, and for the family. One would have to admire the courage of those who, nevertheless, take the decision to join the police force.

Mr Millar

The decision to join is certainly something you would uphold as a Churchman and as a citizen?

Dr Daly

Absolutely.

C O N F I D E N T I A L