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Press Releases

Reflecting on the Past - Building for the Future

Healing Through Remembering (HTR) is inviting people throughout Northern Ireland and further afield to take part in an initial Day of Private Reflection on the Thursday, 21 June 2007.

The cross-community organisation focuses on ways of dealing with the past relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland - with the aim of ensuring a peaceful and stable future for all.

And it says that a Day of Private Reflection can be a positive event, emphasising a commitment to that peaceful future whilst also acknowledging the deep hurt and loss caused by the conflict.

Sean Coll, Chair of the Day of Reflection Sub Group of HTR, says: "Local and international research carried out by HTR indicates that an initiative like this can benefit both individual people and wider society.

"The research has also found that remembering is an important part of healing. The hurts of the past will not go away by ignoring them."

While HTR acknowledges that the time may not yet be right to hold public events, it believes there is merit and benefit in providing an opportunity for people to privately reflect on the conflict, and on the future that is before us.

Kate Turner, HTR Project Co-ordinator, says: "The Day can provide us all with an opportunity to think about the origins and consequences of the conflict."

“We can recognise and acknowledge the suffering caused, reflect on our own attitudes, and make a personal commitment that, as we begin to move forward as a society, we will not allow the tragic events of the past to happen again.”

HTR says that ‘Private’ is the key word in inviting people to join in the initiative.

“It is important that no-one feels coerced or under pressure - participation should be entirely voluntary,” Ms Turner adds.

“Some people may want to reflect on their own, others may choose to do so within a family, group or organisation.

“While no specific events are being planned for the Day, and public events will not be a feature of the Day, all groups can be involved by raising awareness among their members and/or making a place available where reflection can take place.”

HTR is hoping to inform a wide cross-section of organisations and groups about this initial Day of Private Reflection. This includes the churches, the business community and various community and voluntary groups. More details on the Day of Private Reflection will be available on www.dayofreflection.com from the end of April.

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WHY 21 JUNE?

HTR carefully considered a number of dates for a Day of Private Reflection before deciding on 21 June - the summer solstice. It was felt that the longest day of the year was symbolically important because of the ebbing relationship between the hours of dark and light - a symbol of pain and hope in our community. It was also felt that 21 June represents a pause in the cycle of nature: a moment to reflect on both the past and the future. As well, the solstice is a natural event, and nature makes no distinction between races, creeds or political perspectives.

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04/04/2007

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