



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Is the end nigh for the IRA??



From left, Donna, Claire, Gemma, Bridgeen Hagan, Catherine, and Paula.

Some of us have been around long enough to have seen developments in the realm of Northern Ireland politics that, at the time, appeared as threatening to the status of Sinn Fein/IRA within the Roman Catholic community, as does the present campaign mounted and led by the McCartney family. Following the murder of Robert McCartney by the IRA, there have been scenes and speeches and predictions reminiscent of the "Peace People" protest movement of the 1970s. This organisation sprang from a tragedy in which four children of Mrs. Anne Maguire were killed on August 10th, 1976 when a car carrying IRA men crashed into the

family group while it was being chased by the Army. At the time the protests which followed the tragedy seemed to herald the end of the IRA's standing in Roman Catholic West Belfast. Now, after 30 years, Nobel Peace prizes and much public acclaim, the movement of Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan has disappeared over the horizon but the IRA continues on its murderous way!

The fact is that the Roman Catholic community in general will suffer much at the hands of their "liberators" as long as it believes that all things "Protestant and British" are being made to suffer more.

As long as Adams and co. appear to be gaining the upper hand and edging toward the goal of a united Ireland, then the Roman Catholic community will continue to support them. There may well be ripples of protest from those who, like the McCartney family, have been made to experience the true character of the IRA, but the majority will continue with their support.

Cardinals and bishops may issue oblique statements which pass for condemnations but, in truth, Irish Roman Catholicism will remain steadfast. The recent results in a by-election in the Republic of Ireland where the Sinn Fein candidate was a former IRA prisoner, Joe Reilly, should be noted. Although he did not win the seat, the Sinn Fein vote was increased by 3%. This increase came in the wake of the Northern Bank robbery and the McCartney murder.

Time alone will tell if all the media hype about the demise of the IRA has any substance to it. Terrorism has been wedded to Irish Roman Catholicism for a very long time and divorce is not popular within that circle!

As Mark Twain once famously said: "Reports of my demise have been greatly exaggerated." That same exaggeration may yet be seen in the reports of the demise of the IRA.