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**Book Review:
Catholic Social Teaching and Theologies of Peace in Northern Ireland:
Cardinal Cahal Daly and the Pursuit of the Peaceable Kingdom**

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Catholic Social Teaching and Theologies of Peace in Northern Ireland: Cardinal Cahal Daly and the Pursuit of the Peaceable Kingdom. Routledge New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies. Maria Power. London: Routledge, 2021. Hardcover, \$154.28, ISBN 978-0-367-45916-1.

Cardinal Cahal Daly (1917-2009) was a divisive figure in Northern Ireland over the denouement of The Troubles from 1968-1998. He appeared to many to be neither supportive of what were perceived as Catholic causes (Sinn Féin, the IRA), nor fully invested in the lives of the common Catholic when compared to his predecessor, Cardinal Tomas O’Fiaich (but, of course the 1990s were a different time, when the range of discriminatory laws had been repealed and replaced as a result of direct rule). Daly’s Northern Church seemed to be more interested in working with the Protestant, British state or Dublin in a quietist fashion, rather than advocating for Catholic political supremacy. In her new book, Maria Power, a Fellow at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford University, where she is the Director of the Human Dignity Project at the Las Casas Institute for Social Justice, does much to reposition Daly as a pacifist and true advocate for Catholic Social Justice through the trope of the ‘Peaceable Kingdom.’ For Power, the Peaceable Kingdom is a place conceived of via the moral imagination in which the wider Christian community could function ideally, peacefully, with mutual respect and understanding of human dignity. Through a careful examination of Daly’s writings, interviews, and papers held at the Linen Hall Library, Belfast, Power has carefully articulated how the desire for nonviolence was, in fact, at both the heart of Daly’s ministry over the Troubles and later Peace Accords.

It would seem obvious to an outsider to consider a Catholic archbishop, later cardinal, in terms of his faith. Further, it would seem helpful to consider the Catholic Church as a religious faith and not a political faction. But in the case of Catholic Ulster, politics has often taken precedence over prayer when recounting the multifaceted history of the Troubles, especially as Power points out for historians such as Oliver Rafferty, SJ, and Margaret Scull. Power flips this traditional narrative from the first in her study. She argues:

If the Catholic Church in Northern Ireland is defined as an ecclesiastical institution, the nature and mission of which is the establishment of the Kingdom of God as proclaimed in the Gospels, then a different picture emerges...[one] based upon the specific needs of Northern Irish society and influenced by global trends within Catholicism, shaped the Church’s response there (p. 2).

Further, Vatican II, which Daly served at in an advisory academic capacity (he was educated at Queen’s University in Belfast, he lectured there for 21 years, where his students included the future Anglican Primate of All Ireland) was a signal moment for the universal Church, one which informed Daly’s always orthodox responses to violence and ethno-national conflict, even if it was

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perceived to be to the detriment of the Church which he led. Power shows that Daly's desire for Catholics in Northern Ireland was for neighborliness, to live the Beatitudes, practice social justice, while simultaneously "preparing individuals spiritually for the afterlife" (p. 5), and to provide a space of safety for all in Northern Ireland to use God's gifts for themselves – not just Catholics.

According to Power, Daly's speeches that broached ecumenicism were numerous, but dependent on the laity's involvement. Further, a major concern for Daly was how to achieve a Peaceable Kingdom when some of the laity were actively involved in violence to draw attention to social and economic injustices historically meted out most often towards Catholics. Power writes, "the creation of a just society...is a prerequisite for the creation of the Peaceable Kingdom," with "dialogue as the nexus between Gospel and the Magisterium, and empirical analysis" vital elements to help the "deprived (p. 19)." Here, dialogue in the form of talks, homilies, and writing comprised much of Daly's effort to create a just society that bridged together the laity, ecclesiastics, and the wider people of Northern Ireland. Once structural inequalities were squelched, then understanding, peace, and justice could flourish. Yet, as Power shows in Chapter Two, "Christians had to place as much focus on their interior relationship with God as they did on the restructuring of society (p. 27)." Prayer, witness, discernment, were all ways for Christians on both sides of sectarianism to connect with God. This ecumenical desire to unite Christians became integral to Daly's thought over the 1980s when he was translated to the historically marginalized Diocese of Down and Connor, according to Power, and was later iterated in his 1993 'Document on Sectarianism.'

Heading up the Bishopric of Down and Connor, which included Belfast, and the heavily Catholic, strongly republican West Belfast in particular, prompted a shift in Daly's thought from the academic to actualization. Power skillfully articulates how Daly saw the human dignity of his flock destroyed generationally through governmental neglect and the result of this was a societal-wide denial of the humanity of those who resided there. Deprivation was exacerbated by insulation, unemployment, fear, and economic and planning mismanagement from both Britain and the Stormont. Daly turned his attention to those issues as well as fair trials, treatment of prisoners which Power underpins with the salient reminder from Daly that, "so far as republican prisoners are concerned, these visits have left no doubt but that very few of those prisoners would have been involved in criminal activity or would even have seen the inside of a prison, had it not been for the circumstances in which they grew up" (p. 93). The reader is reminded again about Catholic social thought, the writings of various popes advocating for human rights, and how it underpins all of Daly's reactions to what he empirically observes in Northern Ireland. The redemptive spirit seeks not retribution, but peace; not revenge, but understanding. For many, Cardinal Daly was neither outwardly empathetic enough nor brash enough in his defense of nationalist Catholics. Power forces the reader to rethink such assumptions about Daly and sectarianism in Northern Ireland from a position of ecumenical peace and dignity for all.

Power concludes "The Peaceable Kingdom" with chapters exploring the political situation in Northern Ireland and how the Church (and Daly) saw themselves as fitting into or analyzing the paradigm of being a people of peace in a time of war. This discussion of partisan politics then naturally, for Northern Ireland in this time, leads to a conversation on violence. Vatican II made it

clear that the Church and State were separate entities – but that the laity should act with their own conscience in matters of politics – and act in support of leaders who are guided by a desire to help, not hurt. How then does one support a government that is actively persecuting members of a faith, and/or a paramilitary organization that is actively persecuting members of another faith? In Chapter Five, Power methodically explains how Just War theory must be “subject to continuous moral scrutiny” (p. 137) with peace as the desired outcome. Her evenhandedness in explaining the nuances of the Provisional IRA’s and the British government’s arguments about the use of violence versus those of the Church and Daly are meticulous. Further, she skillfully reminds that Daly seeks to prepare his Catholic flock for salvation. How might salvation be reached when human life has been destroyed? When violence became quotidian? When hate was encountered more often than love? Power then concludes with an explanation of the legacy of Daly and what changes have and have not taken place since his retirement in 1996.

In conclusion, this new book by Maria Power demonstrates an incredible breadth of knowledge of the Troubles, Daly, and the Catholic Church. Yet, it is accessible, thought-provoking, and would be of interest to readers in a number of fields, but especially to those of Lived Catholicism, social justice and peace studies, late Twentieth century history, religion, and politics. It is thoroughly researched as evidenced by the myriad quotes from Daly himself. Her theoretical usage of the Peaceable Kingdom and the moral imagination work well to explain the framework that guided Daly as part of his faith. Power has done much for explaining why and how Daly acted as he did from 1968-1996 and it might be argued that if this book had been written earlier, there could have been greater understanding of Daly within his own lifetime.