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Cardinal Cahal Daly: A Vatican II Bishop seeking the Kingdom of God

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Cardinal Cahal Daly (1917-2009) was the only member of the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland to hold office from the beginning of the conflict there in 1969 to the paramilitary ceasefires in 1996. He was well known for his pronouncements on the causes of the conflict and his use of Catholic social teaching to offer solutions. Political structures have played a key role in stabilising Northern Ireland since 1998 and Daly used Catholic concepts of democracy and statecraft to explore alternative possible futures for Northern Ireland in the years prior to their implementation. This article will show how much of his discourse on the nature of the state, centred upon the nature of political justice, and in particular the steps that the British and Irish states needed to take to create a society resembling the Kingdom of God.

Keywords: Northern Ireland; Catholic social teaching; peacebuilding; political justice; democracy; Second Vatican Council.

Introduction¹

The crucible of Northern Ireland, where a conflict based upon socio-economic inequalities lasted for almost thirty years, provides us with an excellent case study of the church as a prophetic voice in the public square and the way in which this voice is used to amplify pleas for peace. From the outset of the conflict in 1968, everyone involved wanted to see a cessation of hostilities. The Catholic Church was therefore not alone in expressing a desire for peace in the public square. But the form that such peace would take was contested: for most peace was an end to violence, but for Christians it was not a goal to be achieved but a state to be lived in which human flourishing was central to every decision made. Christian conceptions of peace were therefore somewhat different to those of state actors who prioritised security and focused upon often very short timelines.

For Christians, the only way to achieve peace was through an ongoing collective praxis (Second Vatican Council, 1965b, #78) focused upon securing social justice. The result would be the realisation of the Kingdom of God, a state which encompassed justice, the dignity of the human person, the common good, development, solidarity, and dialogue and accommodation with other ideologies, denominations and religions. It was a collective endeavour undertaken by both God and humanity (John XXIII, 1963, #167) aimed at challenging and changing the social and political structures of society as well as the attitudes of individuals because as Daniel Levine argues ‘individual acts of kindness and charity are negated by unjust structures of society’ (Levine, 1981, 42). Via the use of such a definition, the Catholic Church tried to move the conversation and action surrounding peace from a focus on security in Northern Ireland to an emphasis upon justice and peace at the heart of which was human dignity and community.

The main proponent of such an approach was Cardinal Cahal Daly (1917-2009) who used the moral imagination, the space where alternative possible futures arising from the creative tension between consciousness raising and the vivid envisioning of a non-existent (but entirely possible) society based upon justice and peace. This moral imagination was primarily ecclesial rather than political as it was centred upon the gospel, and in particular the Sermon on the Mount, Catholic social teaching, and was inspired by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. Once the groundwork had been laid, the laity were then expected to take these ideas

which by this point represented a blend of spiritual, and political and communal praxis, such as development schemes in West Belfast, and enact them in the public sphere.

Cardinal Cahal Brendan Daly was the only member of the hierarchy to hold office from the start of the conflict in 1968 until the ceasefires in 1996 (see Power, 2013). A philosopher by training, Daly was appointed to the bishopric of Ardagh and Clonmacnois in 1967, translated to Down and Connor (encompassing Belfast) in 1982, and Armagh in 1990. He was made a Cardinal in June 1991, serving until his retirement in 1996. He was therefore in the position of being the only Northern Irish bishop to have served in this role throughout the troubles as well as a *peritus* at Vatican II, having witnessed and contributed to the discussions leading to the reforms of the Council. Daly was well known for his pronouncements on the causes of conflict in Northern Ireland and his views on the best means for its amelioration, and whilst he was certainly not alone in voicing his opinion, his was the voice to which the Vatican listened (O'Hagan, 1998). However, he was seen as a divisive figure, praised for his calm assessments of the Northern Irish situation in Britain, and vilified for the same pronouncements in Northern Ireland. Indeed, he was so disliked, even amongst his own clergy, that in her book on Northern Irish Catholics, Fionnuala O'Connor (1995, 286) commented that 'His was the name that switched off the tape recorder' and republican-minded parishioners in Belfast would leave the church when he came to the altar to celebrate Mass (O'Hagan, 1998, 30). However, such criticisms did not detract from what he defined, through his vast catalogue of sermons, publications, and broadcasts, as his mission within the Church and within Northern Irish society: the creation of a society resembling, as far as possible, the Kingdom of God. Thus, throughout his bishopric, he undertook the role of both pastor and prophet, or as the Second Vatican Council termed it, 'a servant of all the sheep' (Second Vatican Council 1965a, #30). Through this he used the moral imagination, the space where alternative possible futures arising from the creative tension between consciousness raising and the vivid envisioning of a non-existent (but entirely possible) society based upon justice and peace.

The Catholic Church in Northern Ireland

The conflict in Northern Ireland, when combined with the changing nature of the Catholic Church's understanding of itself, presented the Northern Irish church with a difficult task. The very nature of the conflict which was, as Marianne Elliott (2009) has demonstrated, motivated by sectarianism, confronted the church leadership in part with the consequences of its policy of pillarization in the years after partition. After 1968, the Catholic Church in Northern Ireland had a very public role to play. One which would be profoundly contested as it was set, as Margaret M. Scull (2019) has shown, against the declining authority of the Catholic Church and which was expected to be more political than ecclesial due to the behaviour of the hierarchy in the post-partition era (1921-1968).

The attitude of the Catholic church towards the Northern Irish state in the years leading up to 1968, could well be described as one of forbearance towards an institution whose legitimacy it did not recognise.ⁱⁱ The Catholic church's main criteria for the state in the period leading up to Vatican II was that it be just and that it promote the common good. The nature of the state was therefore limited by and subordinate to the authority of God:

Because God has created human persons as social there is an obligation to contribute to the common good that benefits each and every person. Furthermore, this common good requires a political institution to protect and promote it. So it is in that sense, of the state as a necessary institution that orders society for the individual and the common good, that we can say that the state's existence is ordained by God. (Himes 2013, 203)

In the pre-conciliar era, Catholics did not believe in the separation of church and state, indeed it was ‘anathema’ to them (Duncan 1991, 10). The church therefore had as much authority as the state within believer’s lives and the family was required to act as the conduit of its teachings. This resulted in an authoritarian stance on matters such as education and morality which caused Protestants in Northern Ireland (and elsewhere) to believe that Catholics were ‘subject to malevolent direction by black-robed priests to whom Rome had entrusted its master plan for world domination’ (Shea 1981, 113). Whilst this led to a siege mentality amongst most Catholics living in ‘secular’ or Protestant states (Aspden 2002) as Elliott’s work illustrates the Catholic church’s nationalism worsened this feeling in Northern Ireland (2009). Church leaders were firmly opposed to the partition of Ireland, a feeling which was shared by the laity. Consequently, ‘after partition northern Catholic society turned in on itself and like the Protestant minority in the South, developed a parallel universe to the majority’ (Elliott 2009, 241). In what Fulton has called ‘a spirit of pillarization’ (Fulton 1991, 99), the church created a state within a state for its community, providing institutions and leadership, thereby minimising their interaction with the Northern Irish state.

Whilst not vast, the historiography on the relationship between church and state in post-partition Northern Ireland (see Harris 1993; Ó Corráin 2006; Rafferty 2008; Elliott 2000; Murray 2000) is generally agreed that the church engaged with the state on its own terms and in doing so took on the role of community defender, bringing the need for justice for the Catholic community and the maintenance of the common good to the government’s attention, becoming more conciliatory as the century progressed (Elliott 2000, 470). As Ó Corráin puts it: ‘the bishops stood with their people first, for whose benefit they engaged in the politics of incremental gain with central government’ (Ó Corráin 2006, 116). The hierarchy also became *de facto* community leaders in the absence of political representation within the nationalist community, eventually becoming interlocutors between the British government and the community in the early years of the troubles. But it is to the hierarchy’s stance on education as an example of their community defence that we first turn.

Education was possibly the defining issue in church-state relations before the 1960s. Under Canon Law, Catholic parents were obliged to send their children to Catholic schools and life was made difficult for those who did not: ‘Catholic parents going outside the Catholic school system encounter[ed] considerable hostility from their clergy when they [sought] help to prepare their children for the sacraments’ (Elliott 2000 458-59). Education was crucial for the transmission of the faith as ‘it was at school that children would become enlightened citizens’, (Perreau-Saussine 2012, 87) and the church wanted them to become enlightened *Catholic* citizens. Consequently, the northern bishops ‘jealously guarded’ (Ó Corráin 2006, 117) the control of the Catholic education system, which had been fought for and won during the previous century, by leading the opposition to all attempts at reform by the Stormont government (see Ó Corráin 2006, 120-132; Harris 1993, 146-196). The Catholic church’s attitude towards education displayed a mixture of antagonism towards the Northern Irish state combined with a philosophy, based upon Catholic social teaching, that emphasised the primacy of family and church in the life of an individual and community. When the Northern Irish government produced a White Paper on Education based upon the 1944 Butler Education Act, the bishops reacted accordingly:

[to impose] either physically or morally, neutral or mixed State schools upon a section of the community against the dictates of their conscience, or to extinguish the free denominational schools by refusing them adequate financial assistance, [the state]

violates the twofold duty that devolves upon her from her obligations to pursue the common good (cited in Ó Corráin 2006, 123).

Such an attitude to control of the education system, which was a universal stance amongst Catholics, heightened the isolation of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland by sustaining and fuelling notions of separateness and siege: ‘whatever the cost, we have no intention of allowing our youth to be deprived of those spiritual aids so necessary to equip them to carry on the traditions for which our forefathers laboured, and fought, and died’ (cited in Ó Corráin 2006, 121-2). Through its protection of education then, the Catholic church was not only defending the rights of its community, but was also guarding and perpetuating its identity – an issue which as we shall see Daly sought to confront.

This isolationist stance, which was in the words of Maurice Hayes, himself a Catholic and the first Chairman of the Community Relations Commission, ‘a recipe for continuous reinforcement of values’ (Hayes 1995, 117), combined with a lack of political leadership within the nationalist community, meant that the church became perceived as ‘sole arbiter of Catholic community projects’ (Elliott 2000, 466) and its *de facto* spokesperson. This as we have seen led to a defensive stance as the church sought to retain control over education, thereby compounding opposition towards the state. The bishops also occasionally spoke out against the injustices experienced by the Catholic community, such as gerrymandering, public employment, and housing, but such occasions were rare, according to Elliott (2000, 458). The hierarchy’s behaviour at the beginning of the troubles indicates strongly that their stances and behaviour were based more upon attitudes to partition than on Catholic teaching regarding the church and state. It was not until this relationship became triangular with the involvement of the British government, that the Northern bishops sought a more positive relationship with the state. The late 1960s saw them not only speaking for the community, but also trying to ameliorate the conflict (rather than putting out statements condemning violence) by supporting Jim Callaghan’s initiatives once they had ‘gained confidence in [the government’s] intentions’ (Callaghan 1973, 80). Cardinal Conway, in particular, was often asked to ‘sell’ policies to the Catholic community:

I told the Cardinal the principle points of the communiqué and that, apart from the GOC, he was the first man to know because it was *his* community which was in trouble. I said I had a request to make of him. I wanted him to give his blessing to the communiqué as soon as it was announced on the television. The Cardinal said that from what I had told him it sounded like a very good agreement and certainly went further than he had expected. He was willing to say something that would be helpful. I thanked him very much and said I was now going to get onto the Press and the radio and television and asked them to go down to Armagh and see him forthwith. So within an hour of the communiqué coming out the Cardinal had given the Catholic community a lead (Callaghan 1973, 97).

Thus, by the time Daly joined the Catholic hierarchy in 1967, a *modus operandi* had emerged amongst the bishops on matters relating to the state which put the needs of their community first and which sought to promote justice and the common good on terms beneficial to Catholics. This solidified identity through, for example, their stance on education, and protected the community during a period of immense turmoil. However, this period also saw changes in the nature of the nationalist political leadership in Northern Ireland with men such as John Hume and Gerry Fitt emerging, as well as significant changes in Catholic thought on the relationship between the church and the state. As a consequence, Daly now sought to find

a new place for the church in the delicate political ecosystem that was Northern Ireland. He recognised the legitimacy of the state but held it and those who sought to lead it, both nationalist and unionist, up to considerable scrutiny.

Daly and the Causes of the Conflict in Northern Ireland

Daly's analysis of the role of the state, and in particular citizens' allegiance to the state, in the causes of the conflict in Northern Ireland tells us much about his vision for the Kingdom of God. Such an analysis was to have implications for Daly's response to the conflict and provided him a platform from which to use Vatican II's teachings on religious freedom and the role of the laity in particular to create teachings on the relationship of the church to state in Northern Ireland that were aimed at both nationalists and unionists. In the opening years of the conflict, Daly argued that 'the disaster of partition' (Daly 1968-1975) was one of its main causes. His analysis demonstrated that the Northern Irish state was sectarian, and fuelled republican violence through the creation of barriers between the two communities: 'The barricades, after all, were social, economic and political before they ever became physical. The "no-go" areas were no-industry, low employment, no- or low- social amenity areas, areas deprived of civil rights and political equality and what unionists like to call British standards of justice' (Daly 1968-1975). This had certainly been the contemporary leaderships' analysis of the problem with Cardinal MacRory remarking in 1925 that 'if loyalty is to be expected on one side, bare justice must be looked for on the other' (cited in Harris 1993, 173). The pre-Vatican II leadership understood these issues following the collapse of the Boundary Commission in 1925 as religious bigotry, as Harris points out, 'Bishops and priests interpreted the causes of their problems as religious bigotry and unwillingness or inability on the part of the northern government to afford Catholics protection against Protestant violence' (Harris 1993, 257). They acted accordingly to defend their community, particularly in the areas of education, which was most closely aligned with church teaching.

Daly, however, framed the issue as a failure of democracy which allowed Protestants 'irremovable dominance over a permanent minority of Catholics' (Daly 1968-1973), an analysis that was supported by that of the 1973 White Paper, which acknowledged the lack of democracy in Northern Ireland and sought to ensure full representation in the future. Daly remained consistent in this analysis, stating in 1993 that 'Northern Ireland was given a univocally unionist constitution, which made no constitutional concessions whatever to the nationalist community and to its Irish identity and to its aspiration towards an Irish rather than British union' (Daly 1993-1996). Through partition, the British government had therefore institutionalised sectarianism, leading Daly to argue that it was not the presence of the state itself which caused the conflict, but the existence of two communities, each of which felt under threat from the other. The issue was further compounded rather than caused in the period leading up to the conflict by the behaviour of the British state; a conclusion that was to greatly influence his analysis of political participation. Daly further argued that each community had equal political rights. In this understanding Daly was shifting the emphasis of the Catholic Church in Ireland. The idea that justice, the common good, and access to the political representation were for *everyone*, Protestant and Catholic alike, became the key to his analysis and to the vision of the Kingdom that he was offering. The church was no longer the defender of the Catholic community, insulating it from the world, but instead acting as a prophetic voice emphasising the message of the Kingdom of God and seeking to create a more Christocentric society.

The conflict in Northern Ireland was therefore, according to Daly, 'one of competing cultures, rival nationalisms, conflicting social classes' (Daly 1968-1975), in short, the result of 'two

Ulster loyalties' (Daly 1976-1983). It was an internal conflict exacerbated by the behaviour of the British and Irish states. He initially framed the causes of this situation in colonial terms, quoting John Hewitt's, *The Colony*, in 1975 as an illustration of this. This poem he suggested demonstrated the 'mingled attractions and suspicions through which the descendants of the Planters look[ed] towards the descendants of the natives, their fears for their own future, their proud, defiant assertion in the face of the natives of their sense of belonging and of their sense of rights' (Daly 1968-1975). Such colonial interpretations of the conflict were quickly sidelined within academic discourse, and were replaced by the idea of ethnic conflict (Whyte 1991, 177-79). Daly followed suit, and adopted a form of analysis which emphasised the parity of both communities and their right to democratic political representation – an argument which he pursued throughout his bishopric, using it as the foundation for interpretation and the solutions he would put forward. According to Daly, this identity was determinedly political and based upon attitudes towards territory and allegiance. In his Sermon on World Peace Day 1981 he stated:

It is basic to the understanding of the whole political problem in Northern Ireland that there are two Northern Ireland communities, each with a different understanding of the term "Ulster", each with a distinctive kind of Ulster loyalty.

...

One community see Ulster as a province of Ireland and themselves a part of an Irish nation. The other community see Ulster as an Irish province of Britain and themselves as British citizens. There are therefore, two kinds of Ulster loyalty not one.

...

The problem of Northern Ireland is that of finding ways of sharing two traditions, not ways of institutionalising one or other of two traditions, with suppression of the other. It is a problem of finding appropriate institutions for giving political expression to two equally valid loyalties (Daly 1976-1983).

This has certainly been the fundamental issue throughout the conflict, and until 1998 and the Good Friday Agreement, was the focus of all attempts at settlement by the British and Irish governments. Whilst this in itself would be enough to create an analysis of the causes of the conflict, by 1989 Daly was expressing these ideas in terms of the 'double minority' model, seeing this analysis as 'by now standard' (Daly 1989-1990). Whyte defines this model as a situation where 'minorities are groups which feel threatened; that threatened groups are liable to be hypersensitive; and that in Northern Ireland both groups display these characteristics' (Whyte 1991, 100).

The two minorities in question were unionists and loyalists, and nationalists and republicans. Within the context of his writings on Church-State relations, Daly focused his attention on unionists and very occasionally nationalists, who sought to achieve their political aims through constitutional means rather than physical force. Whilst Daly reserved most of his ire for physical-force republicans (Power 2021, 137-161), he directed some of it at unionists who he argued as late as 1994 'need to realise that no political institutions Northern Ireland can succeed or survive unless they win the consent and the allegiance of the nationalist community' (Daly 1993-1996). Much of the tone of his writings on the subject of unionism and its political ideology followed these lines. Throughout his bishopric his discontent at the behaviour of the Unionist Stormont regime (1921-1972) was particularly obvious. In 1972, he described the foundation of the Northern Irish state the result of a 'fanatical sectarian campaign', which turned the religious doctrine of Protestantism into a political ideology. The result was a state based upon 'political patronage and preference on the grounds of religious belief' (Daly 1968-

1975), which discriminated against nationalists establishing, for example, ‘Catholic ghettos ... deliberately created by sectarian zoning which was [the unionist government’s] official housing policy’ (Daly 1968-1975); a point he was still making as late as 1993 when he stated: ‘the outcome could arguably have been different had the ruling unionist majority treated the nationalist minority with scrupulous fairness and justice and tried to reconcile them to the new regime’(Daly 1987-1988). Such behaviour he suggested continued in a different form after direct rule was introduced in 1972, arguing that this event had ‘not enhanced the reputation of Unionist Party leaders’(Daly 1968-1975). His reaction to the furore surrounding the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement provides an understanding of his critique of unionism.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement signed in November 1985 by Margaret Thatcher and Charles Haughey sought ‘to develop the unique relationship between [the British and Irish] peoples and the close co-operation between their countries as friendly neighbours and as partners in the European Community’ (HMSO 1985) in order to achieve peace and stability in Northern Ireland. This recognition of the role of the Republic of Ireland in the affairs of Northern Ireland was unacceptable to unionists:

If the British Government, through the Anglo Irish Agreement tries to take our liberty away from us, then there is no other course of action open for the Northern Ireland people but to do what Lord Carson did and that is to resist by what ever force they can muster. ... I appeal for the mobilization of the Ulster people. At the moment structures are being set up for that mobilization. ... I will also be advocating the enlistment of the Northern Ireland people in a show of strength – dedicated to die if needs be rather than surrender to a united Ireland (cited in Cochrane 1997, 112).

This speech by Protestant messiah (Daly 1984-1986) and demagogue, the Rev. Dr. Ian Paisley, (whom Daly rarely named even when referring to his leadership of the unionist and loyalist communities) was redolent of the ‘sectarian fanaticism’ of the early 20th century which Daly abhorred and the rhetoric it contained was a commonplace reaction to the Agreement. The result was a series of street protests and violent disorder which, according to Daly left unionists, ‘humiliated before the world through being presented as a community of bigots’ (Daly 1984-1986). Daly saw this reaction to the Anglo-Irish Agreement as another attempt by the Unionist community to seek to impose its will on nationalists. In the months before the Agreement, for example, he had stated: ‘Unionism ... supported by the British Government, seeks to impose on a whole territory a unionist constitution which gives no recognition to nearly two-fifths of its population and which therefore deprives nearly 600,000 people of constitutional legitimacy’(Daly 1984-1986). It was such territorial claims with their inherent failure to recognize the needs and demands of constitutional nationalism which lay at the heart of Daly’s assessment of unionism: nationalism simply had to be recognized. In 1989, he used the World Day of Peace theme of ‘the rights of minorities’ to remind unionists of their obligations towards nationalists, pointing out that ‘they never speak of them as fellow citizens,’ and telling them that they needed to ‘show some generosity of spirit’ (Daly 1989-1990).

Despite the sometimes harsh rhetoric, Daly did show some sympathy and compassion for unionists, seeking to understand why they behaved in such a manner in order to integrate them more fully into the analysis of society he was offering. From the early 1980s onwards, he spoke of Protestant insecurity and alienation. Daly suggested that Protestant triumphalism ‘concealed a deep and pervasive insecurity’ (Daly 1984-1986) which affected their interactions with nationalists. Such feelings were intensified by the lack of democracy in Northern Ireland, an impression that the nationalist community shared, which alienated unionists from the state.

The Ulster Unionist Party had highlighted this in 1984:

The present system of direct rule is the subject of justifiable criticism in that it is often inaccessible to local opinion, insensitive to local views, and politically unaccountable to the Northern Ireland electorate. The most basic services such as health, education, housing, and the environment which matter so much to every citizen, are the subject of no real democratic control. The essential services, as well as others, are administered by the civil servants of the relevant departments of the Northern Ireland Office who are answerable only to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and his team of junior ministers. Delay in decision making and consequent frustration are the inevitable result when bureaucrats are not accountable to any electorate (Ulster Unionist Party 1984).

Such insecurity regarding the constitutional status and future of the state had resulted in a siege mentality amongst Protestants, creating a vicious circle of alienation and deprivation in working class loyalist communities as well as republican/nationalist ones (McManus 2015), an attitude which was according to Daly, ‘unhealthy and harmful to the Protestant community itself’ (Daly 1976-1983).

Political Justice as a Path to Peace

Much of his discourse then centred upon the nature of political justice, and in particular the steps that the British and Irish states needed to take to create the Kingdom of God. British policy, focusing as it did on the containment of violence in the hope that a mutually hurting stalemate would eventually lead to a cessation of paramilitary activity, was fundamentally flawed. This point was made by Daly in 1978 when he argued that ‘even if the violence were eliminated, Northern Ireland would remain chronically politically unstable and a violence prone society unless the root causes of the violence were firmly tackled and unless the political structures of a just society, recognised as such by both communities were established’ (Daly 1976-1983). Daly argued that the British state was abdicating its responsibilities to the people of Northern Ireland by failing to create a society ‘in which the pursuit of the good, the true, the beautiful, and the just will be made less difficult for more and more people, and obstacles to the attainment of these moral ends will be as far as possible reduced or removed’ (Daly 1976-1982). Thus, in an era of religious freedom ushered in by the Second Vatican Council, the state, instead of being subservient to a dominant church which viewed itself as a political power, was now being critiqued instead of courted, and asked to ensure that justice transcended political ideologies.

Daly’s analysis was not just confined to the structures of the state, but also included participation in the democratic process by both unionists and nationalists. For a state to work, it has to operate as a community. The Catholic Church’s teachings on the nature of democracy and Daly’s interpretation of them for the Northern Irish context demanded that people take justice and the need to ensure human flourishing into account in their political decision-making. For Daly,

politics is a morality for living. It is [the] patient unwearying effort to achieve the obtainable good for living people now. It is open to any dialogue, ready for any discussion with any person or group whose views are relevant or whose consent is necessary, in order that people may have peace (Daly 1968-1975).

Both Nationalists and Unionists had to behave in a way that would make peace possible, and Daly spent a good deal of time, in addition to critiquing the behaviours of the British and Irish governments, outlining how this was possible and its relationship to seeking the Kingdom.

Daly offered his critique of the British and Irish states using the non-violent method of protest and persuasion through formal statements and communications with wider society (Sharp, 2012, 124-25). He sought to hold the British and Irish governments to account, sometimes quite forcefully reminding them of the need to take responsibility in the search for an equitable solution to the conflict rather than relying upon the suppression of violence as a means of conflict management. Daly's engagement in what can be broadly termed a redefinition of the Catholic Church's relationship to the state, and therefore direct political participation in Ireland, should be viewed very much in terms of the emergent political peace process and the need for more equitable structures of governance to be established. Daly's methods and the vision presented for such structures were grounded in the gospel and the Magisterium. His method centred upon a rational and empirically-based interpretation of the Northern Irish context, and were communicated through non-violent means. Additionally, he saw the pursuit of political justice as a means of achieving the binary of personal and social salvation and conversion that was so crucial to his ministry to the people of Northern Ireland.

The Laity and Attitudes to the 'Other'

As well as seeking to diagnose the malady afflicting Northern Irish society, Daly also sought cures. Once more, these were rooted firmly within the gospel and the social teachings of the Catholic Church. The solution to the issue of the double minority, which Daly argued was one of the key causes of the conflict, was mutual understanding and acceptance. This would be achieved by the use of the methods of ecumenical dialogue (Power 2021, 42-55). Daly defined the initial terms of such mutual acceptance and understanding quite forcefully in 1972:

Nationalists and republicans simply must stop pretending that Unionists are lapsed United Irishmen, merely requiring a push from Britain or a pamphlet from republican headquarters to bring them back to the Tone tradition. Unionists must simply stop claiming that nationalists are secret unionists, prevented by republican intimidation or Catholic educational indoctrination from avowing their attachment to the British connection (Daly 1968-1975).

Initially, Daly placed the onus on nationalists to make a 'sustained effort to understand [unionist] thinking'(Daly 1968-1975) but by 1975, he was suggesting that 'each community must come to accept each other on the others' terms' (Daly 1968-1975). Daly felt that there was a deliberate misunderstanding between unionists and nationalists: 'the opportunities for consensus are threatened by [unionists'] refusal to distinguish constitutional nationalism and republicanism'(Daly 1976-1983). Such endeavours would, he hoped, lead to the creation of mutual trust between the two communities, a crucial element in the process of building the Kingdom.

In 1987, Daly framed this in terms of solidarity, a vital component of the Catholic Church's vision of democracy. Daly's employment of solidarity as a means of ameliorating the conflict in Northern Ireland enables us to see clearly the missionary nature of the Catholic Church during the conflict. Once more the binary nature of this endeavour can be seen: not only was the individual being transformed, but through such a development, Daly was also enabling a more Christocentric vision to emerge that would reshape the structures of society. The concept of solidarity sought to change the ways in which human relationships were viewed and enacted.

Steering a path between the individualism espoused by liberalism and the authoritarian collectivism demanded by communism and fascism, solidarity placed human dignity at the heart of relationships. In doing so, all people were called upon to reclaim responsibility for themselves and play a more active role in transforming the shape of society into that espoused by the gospels. Solidarity was particularly important to John Paul II's papacy, and in *Sollicitudo rei Socialis* (1987) he defined it as 'a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all' (#38). The need to overcome division was central to this conceptⁱⁱⁱ and it therefore had a great deal of resonance for Northern Irish society. As Daly's analysis of the causes of the conflict had shown, the common good had been ignored in Northern Ireland. Solidarity – a core element, alongside development, of peace (Daly 1987-1988) -- was non-existent in Northern Ireland, a situation which was perpetuated by the failure of the two communities to even attempt to understand one another: 'human solidarity breaks down the cycles of violence, as one grievance evokes another, as one war is followed by another' (Lamb 1994, 912). The clash between unionism and nationalism was an ideological conflict which was preventing peace in Northern Ireland – a factor which was highlighted by Daly when he quoted Pope John Paul II:

Can there be a lasting peace in a world ruled by relations – social, economic and political – that favour one group or nation at the expense of another? Can a genuine peace be established without an effective recognition of that wonderful truth that we are all equal in dignity, equal because we have been formed in the image of God, who is our Father? (John Paul II 1986).

Daly's understanding of peace and conflict was sophisticated enough to understand that harmony and the common good were not going to be achieved just by a bland conversation during which participants essentially talked at one another without really seeking to understand the other's viewpoint. Rather, he called for a profound change of mind-set within the context of Northern Ireland: 'we must be concerned for the rights of the other community as well as for our own' (Daly 1987-1988). This was because:

Democracy is dialogue. It is negated when we impose the silence of the grave on those who disagree; or when we drive out of our society or community or street those "of the other kind". Democracy is reasonable discussion, persuasion, conviction. It dies when we replace persuasion by force and treat others as objects to be bombed into unwilling submission, not persons to be persuaded into free consent (Daly 1976-1983).

These were radical statements for a Catholic bishop and shows how he sought to transform Northern Irish society. Christians (both Catholic *and* Protestant) needed to become determined 'to overcome sources of division within themselves and in society' (Benestad 2010, 203). Daly espoused this clearly when he said:

it is natural and it is good and even obligatory to be concerned about the fundamental and inalienable rights of our own community. What is more difficult, but in our situation imperative, is that ... we take to ourselves the warning of the Pope against "ideologies that breed hatred or distrust" (Daly 1987-1988).

Such a process would lead to the development of meaningful dialogue through which the two communities would acknowledge and understand their interdependence and become dedicated

to working for the common good of all and the creation of a stable democracy in Northern Ireland.

Daly therefore saw the causes of the conflict in Northern Ireland as individual and communal as well as structural: “structures of sin” and personal sins, in which the sinful structures are rooted, cause disorder in the soul and disunity in society’ (Benestad 2011, 203). Thus the solutions put forward were structural, based upon a meaningful political dialogue and on the role of the laity in creating new political mind-sets within and across communal boundaries.

The Laity and Attitudes to the State

As new understandings of mission in the post-conciliar era mandated, the laity were now expected to become politically conscious and active. *Gaudium et Spes* taught: ‘Let all Christians appreciate their special and personal vocation in the political community. This vocation requires that they give conspicuous example of devotion to the sense of duty and of service to the advancement of the common good’ (Second Vatican Council 1965b, #74). Speaking in 1973 and addressing *all* Christians (both Catholic and Protestant), Daly had argued that ‘the Vatican Council ... summons to a real renewal of our politics’ (Daly 1968-1975). In the context of Northern Ireland, this was an urgent task and Daly sought, in particular, to help Christians redefine their attitude to the state itself. His teaching on this matter was based upon Jesus’s command to ‘Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s’ (Mk 12:17). Daly’s use of this particular passage to illustrate and explain his teachings on the proper relationship of the Christian to the state, instead of for example Romans 13,^{iv} is telling, and demonstrates his desire to contextualize and translate the teachings of the Catholic Church for Northern Ireland. The relationship of religion to the state, and in particular the obligation to pay taxes, was one of the burning issues of Jesus’ time. The Zealots, who were dedicated to resisting and overthrowing the Roman regime and replacing it with a Jewish government, were refusing to pay taxes. Thus, the question put to Jesus by the Pharisees and Herodians, ‘is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?’ (Mk, 12:14.) was loaded. It demonstrated an allegiance to group and identity that placed ideology above fidelity to God. Daly states that in his reply ‘Jesus ... transcends the whole discussion, raising it to a higher plane’ (Daly 1968-1975). Although there has been some debate as to Jesus’s revolutionary intentions, in his reply He did not seek to replace one government with another, rather He ‘wanted a change that would affect every department of life and that would reach down to the most basic assumptions of Jew and Roman’ (Nolan 1992, 95). Here, the particular relevance of this Gospel passage for Northern Ireland becomes evident. Unionists and Nationalists in Northern Ireland had been guilty of the same fault as Zealots, Pharisees, and Herodians: they had put their allegiance to the group above God, allowing their lives to be ordered by nationalistic ideologies rather than the Gospels: ‘The Nation and the Cause become self-justifying sources of moral value, superseding the ten commandments’ (Daly 1987-1988). In doing so, they had contributed to the creation of the conflict. Instead, Daly told them that they should: ‘Let God be God not the party nor the nation, not the race or the class, not the system or the slogan, not the Revolution nor the Constitution’ (Daly 1968-1975). In re-developing their relationship to the state, Daly was asking the laity to regain control of their political ideology and seek to employ it to realize the Kingdom because ‘it is in the Lord that we find our strength and not in any political tradition’ (Daly 1984-1986). A new Christian attitude to politics had to emerge; one which was imbued with compassion and love for everyone rather than just the in-group.

In a conflict dominated by language and its use as a social identifier (Byrne and Carter 2002), Daly used the abuse of language as an example of the lack of compassion and love in Northern

Irish politics. By tackling this issue, all Christians could become politically aware and involved. In doing so, the laity could move towards the new forms of actions and changes in lifestyle required to fully realize the new role as missionaries of the Kingdom handed to them at the Second Vatican Council. Slogans such as ‘get the British out!’, ‘Ulster is British’, ‘Never trust the British’; and ‘No surrender’, were commonplace in Northern Ireland during the conflict. In Daly’s view, such language was paralyzing politics in Northern Ireland and creating an atmosphere in which progress was unlikely to be made and, most importantly, preventing the establishment of democracy. Much of this language was used ‘unthinkingly’ (Daly 1987, 1988) and as ‘Christians were to be exemplary citizens of the society in which they lived’ (Daly 1968-1975), they should make a conscious attempt to avoid its use as ‘to rid the language of each community of disparaging and offensive terms ... would be a contribution to building bridges of understanding and mutual acceptance between our communities’ (Daly 1987-1988).

Political consciousness and activity were core elements of the Church’s mission in society. Once more the binaries of individual and community, and the two kingdoms were evident in Daly’s thought. In order to seek the transformation of society that Daly argued was the key to the creation of the Kingdom, people had to renew themselves: ‘No revolution in society will produce a new man without the conversion of heart which turns our hard hearts into hearts with the universal tenderness of Christ’ (Daly 1968-1975). As the Second Vatican Council had ‘rediscovered a degree of confidence in human nature’, (Perreau-Saussine 2012; Greerley 1977) the political mission gave Christians the chance ‘attain their own perfection’ (Second Vatican Council 1965b, #74) through their transformation of society.

Political Participation by the Laity

The political vocation was a recurring theme in Daly’s writings and once more the primacy of the laity in the temporal realm was at the centre of his argument: ‘No society can ultimately be better than its politics. This is why all Christians must now learn that an absolutely primary field for Christian action and concern is precisely politics. ... It is forty years since Maritain called for saints of politics’ (Daly 1968-1975). Here Daly was returning the church to its early Christian roots during which Christians were expected to ‘battle’ together for a ‘common cause’ (Phil 1:27), namely Christ’s gospel with all its political implications for the transformation of society. Daly’s initial emphasis lay upon the regeneration of politics, citing the renewal of the church at Vatican II as an inspiration for this:

I suggest that the post-conciliar experience of the Church can indeed be the vanguard for the renewal of political life and institutions. Never, perhaps in her history has the Church been so resolutely committed to radical renewal and to risk-taking change than in these years since the close of the Second Vatican Council (Daly 1968-1975).

He thus called for a similar *aggiornamento* to take place within Northern Irish politics. Daly’s initial writings on the matter in the early 1970s were framed as ‘an appeal to the Christian conscience of every single politician’ (Daly 1968-1975). Thus the individual as well as society was to be perfected by this renewal of the political sphere. The individual politician needed to be shaped by his Christian faith and become ‘endowed with both the Christian passion for justice, charity and truth, and the indispensable technical and cultural competence required for modern government’ (Daly 1968-1975). Christianity was therefore public and not private. It could not be compartmentalized within the politician’s life: ‘A politician’s Christianity is proved by the nature of his politics as much as by the frequency of his prayer’ (Daly 1968-1975). The Christian political vocation therefore involved a commitment to the truth in which the individual engaged in an ongoing critique of society based upon the Gospel which promoted

peace rather than violence. This issue of violence was to recur strongly in Daly's writings in the 1980s, and which was linked to his ongoing critique of paramilitary organizations, when he censured politicians for failing to show leadership in Northern Ireland. Although he had acknowledged the powerlessness of politicians in late 1970s which was being caused by the lack of democracy in Northern Ireland (Daly 1976-1983), Daly believed that a dearth of political leadership was creating a vacuum which was being filled by paramilitaries. Despite the lack of official structures through which politicians could speak, he stated that: 'Brave voices on both sides have been raised calling for ... respect for differences between communities; but more such voices must be raised and be raised more loudly and more clearly. Such spokesmen must make still more vigorous efforts to promote their reconciling influence' (Daly 1987-1988). Such ideas were, by the 1990s, being framed in terms of the social contract of Christianity which built upon those expressed in the 1970s and 1980s. Here, Daly was arguing that the political vocation required Christians to opt-in to politics (Daly 1984-1986). Indeed, there was a moral obligation to do so.

Daly was thus arguing for a change of heart by the people of Northern Ireland. Such change would not only prepare them individually for salvation but would also challenge and ultimately transform the unjust structures of society. He understood that the conflict was not just caused by the socio-economic deprivation but that attitudes and relationships also had to be converted in order to build the Kingdom. Despite the democratic deficit that was crippling Northern Ireland's formal political representation, Christians still had a political role to play. They could do this by overcoming communal boundaries through dialogue, decompartmentalizing their faith and putting it at the centre of their political decision making, and reflecting upon the attitudes and actions towards the other that were fueling the conflict.

Conclusion

Daly espoused reconciliation at a time when it was unfashionable to do so and through his critique of community attitudes to each other and the impact of these upon democratic structures in Northern Ireland, he was able to bring the teachings of the Second Vatican Council to bear upon the conflict. Through this he taught the laity, both Catholic and Protestant, that it was their responsibility to work for justice and peace on the island of Ireland and that in doing so they were working towards their own personal salvation as well as making the Kingdom of God a reality. Daly's words often were prescient, but as current events in Northern Ireland show, the work of a peace bishop is often only likely to produce results long after their death.

Endnotes

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ⁱⁱ There is some confusion as to whether the Catholic church recognized the legitimacy of the Northern Irish state before the outbreak of the Troubles. Oliver Rafferty suggests that such a declaration was made in 1956 but the wording of the statement cited is ambiguous to say the least (Rafferty 2008, 106). Whereas Richard Rose (1971, 250) points out that ‘Terence O’Neill ... failed in his attempts to get the hierarchy to show positive approval of the regime.’

ⁱⁱⁱ See for example #49: ‘By sharing the good things you give us, may we secure justice and equality for every human being, an end to all division and a human society built on love and peace.’

^{iv} ‘Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. ... For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who busy with this very thing. Pay to all what is due to them – taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due.’ Romans 13: 1, 6-7.

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