

Irish prelate praises peace efforts

By Cian Molloy
Catholic News Service

DUBLIN, Ireland — Archbishop Sean B. Brady of Armagh, Northern Ireland, welcomed efforts to break the deadlock in the Northern Ireland peace process.

Archbishop Brady said lasting peace can be achieved if each side demonstrates "that it is dependable, willing and able to play its part."

"Only in this way can the trust, which the whole process requires, continue to be built up and strengthened," the archbishop said in a statement.

He praised an announcement by the Irish Republican Army that the outlawed paramilitary group was ready to disarm.

The archbishop called disarming an "indispensable part" of the peace process.

"The violence and rioting on the streets of Belfast (Northern Ireland) and elsewhere in recent weeks are a tragic reminder of the risk of failure. Continuing political uncertainty and a political vacuum provide the opportunity for violent factions to pursue their sinister purposes. It is imperative that the uncertainty be ended and the vacuum filled. The risks of failure are too grave to contemplate," he said.

The government proposals are a bid to save the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement that promised to bring about a lasting settlement between nationalists and loyalists in Northern Ireland.

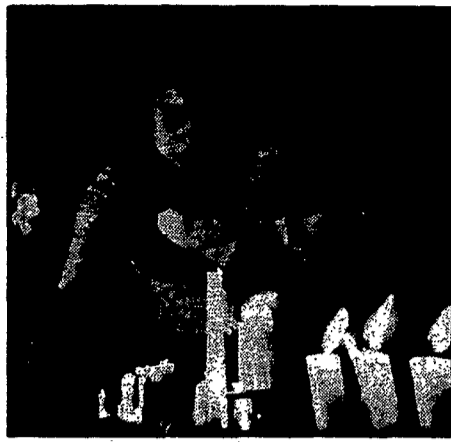
Loyalists, primarily Protestants, believe

Northern Ireland should remain part of Great Britain. Nationalists, mainly Catholics, believe Northern Ireland should become part of the Irish Republic.

The peace process was weakened in recent months by the resignation of David Trimble, head of the Ulster Unionist Party, in protest of the IRA's refusal to disarm.

As part of the joint proposals, British army bases will close as the IRA disarms, eventually leading to a complete end to the British army presence in Northern Ireland.

If the rival parties cannot agree on a new first minister by Aug. 12, Britain must call fresh provincewide elections or suspend the home-rule government and reimpose direct rule from London, reported Reuters, the British news agency.



Reuters/CNS

Women remember murdered teenager Gavin Brett July 31, the day after he was gunned down in Glengormley, Northern Ireland. Gavin, a Protestant, had been standing outside a Catholic sports club.



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Migrants forego Mass out of fear

"Raul Hernandez," as he chose to identify himself, said he couldn't have his real name published because he is working on a Monroe County farm without proper documentation.

In other words, he's in the United States illegally.

Hernandez, 22, said he is from southern Mexico and has been working on and off in various states throughout this country for the past few years. He has come to this country, he said, because there is "more work and more food here" than in Mexico. He is currently working to support his wife and two small children back home by harvesting cucumbers, cabbages and apples here.

Speaking through an interpreter, Hernandez said virtually all of his coworkers in the fields are Mexicans, or from elsewhere in Latin America. He said he generally stays off the main roads around the farm for fear of being seen by immigration authorities who might stop him and discover he is here illegally. Yet, he said that he does go to Mass in Brockport when he can get a ride.

"I'm not afraid to go to church because God will protect us," he said.

Advocates hopeful about immigration proposals
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Unsafe Sabbath

Hernandez's words seem brave, and for most Catholics, Sunday is still considered a day of rest. But for Catholics who happen to live in the United States illegally, Sunday may be the day they're arrested.

It was the fear of arrest that kept a number of migrant farmworkers from attending the 1:30 p.m. Spanish Mass at Nativity of Our Lady Church in Brockport on Sunday, Aug. 5, according to Chic Ferrigno, a volunteer with Hispanic Migrant Ministry, a joint ministry of the dioceses of Rochester and Buffalo.

Ferrigno and other volunteers sometimes drive several farmworkers from area farms to Sunday Mass, he said, but this Sunday, none would accept a ride into town to go to church.

Over and over, Ferrigno said, when the farmworkers explained why they didn't want to go to Mass, they used the phrase "la migra" — Spanish shorthand for U.S. immigration authorities of all kinds, including the U.S. Border Patrol. The week before, at least seven migrants

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STORY BY ROB CULLIVAN