

Sean Óglaigh Na hÉireann/Friends of Irish Freedom

Easter Commemoration and Mass

After the ceremony, those present proceeded to the Easter Mass and Commemoration organized by Sean Óglaigh na h-Éireann and the Friends of Irish Freedom at Kelly Ryan's Restaurant, the Irish American Cultural Club of Long Island, the Tipperary N & B association and Saoirse NJ. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Pat Maloney who gave another stirring sermon, perhaps his best, regarding the reality of life in the 26 county Irish Free State and in the occupied six counties. Never known to pull his punches. He said that during his most recent trip to Ireland he found evidence that the Celtic tiger has devoured many of its poor while rewarding the rich. He went on to say that recent developments in the British occupied six counties would have Michael Flannery turn over in his grave, because these developments are based on injustice, will the end of British rule, therefore, will not bring unity and independence to Ireland.

After Mass, Master of Ceremonies Martin Lyons, a lifelong activist both in Ireland and in America for the cause of Irish independence, introduced the dais. Martin welcomed Ken Tierney another icon of Irish republicanism who is back from a long illness. He also asked for a moment's silence for those who died in the past year including Frank Durkan, Bart Dougherty and Eileen Flynn from Philadelphia

The dais included Tom Beirne of the Leitrim Society, former Congressman and founder of the Ad Hoc Committee on Irish affairs, Mario Biaggi, Tony Creany of the Antrim Society, Bob Loughman of the National Irish Freedom Committee, Michael, Sean and Jimmy McDermott; grand nephews of Seán Mac Diarmada who was one of the organizers of the Easter Rising, Charlie Mc Loughlin of the Friends of Irish Freedom, Mary Holt Moore of the Bronx Gaelic League, who was honored in 2006 by Cumann Na Saoirse, John Murphy of the Tipperary N & B Association and Mary Nolan of the John Barry Club.

After a traditional Irish breakfast, Bridie McBearty from Derry City, the guest speaker from Ireland, was introduced. Bridie spoke eloquently regarding the current and ongoing situation in the six occupied counties. Birdie's son George was murdered by the SAS in 1981. Her other son Danny is a founding member of the "EX-POWS against the RUC/PSNI", of which Bridie is a patron. The breakfast was a very well attended again this year. It was a great success and congratulations are in order to the organizing committee, in particular chairperson Cathleen O'Brien.