



It would be unwise to refuse. His
other engagements are not
(2) matter for me
Ara Coeli
Ard Mhacha/Armagh

Prime Minister

Not very gracious - to put it
mildly!

fn - Plus

2nd June, 1981.

I have asked for advice. Mr Atkin is seeing Cardinal
Hume (who has praised your Belfast speech) to-morrow. The Cardinal
is taking an interest in this meeting.

Dear Prime Minister,

Plus 4/6

Thank you for your letter of 28th May. I am afraid it was not possible for me to rearrange part of my programme for that day at such short notice.

I will be in London on 30th June - 1st July but I should point out that the reason for my visit is an invitation from the Parish Priest of Balham to commemorate with his parishioners the third centenary of the execution of a former Archbishop of Armagh, St. Oliver Plunkett. The execution took place on 1st July 1681. You might not consider this the most auspicious occasion for a meeting.

In addition, having read your speech at Stormont last week, and being aware that two events will be pending - the death of more hunger strikers unless something happens to persuade them to end their strike, and the marches leading up to the 'Twelfth of July' celebrations - I wonder at the wisdom of having a meeting at that time which will undoubtedly become public. We both have a common concern to keep normal life going and to work unceasingly for peace and reconciliation.

If you think that a meeting at that time would be helpful I would be free to go straight from Heathrow Airport (arriving 3.40 p.m.) to Downing Street on Tuesday, 30th June, or alternatively to call on you sometime after 7 p.m. on Wednesday, 1st July.

Yours very sincerely,
Tomás Ó Fiaich

Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
Whitehall,
LONDON.