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Welcome to the latest edition of the IACI e-news.

Founded in 1962, the IACI is the leading Irish American cultural organization. The IACI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national organization devoted to promoting an intelligent appreciation of Ireland and the role and contributions of the Irish in America.

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# Irish American Boldness

By

Raymond. D. Aumack, M. Div., MA, NC PSY. P.

Dierdre O'Rourke and her fiancé, Tom Farrell, were preparing for their trip to Rochester. Dave Garvey insisted that they use the company plane. They will fly up there late this afternoon and the plane will be at the Greater Rochester International Airport to pick them up next Saturday at noon. They will stay at a Hilton Hotel. Dierdre will have a TV interview and a radio interview in the course of the week. They have an afternoon meeting with Michael Lynch, her lawyer, after which he will drive her to a nursing home to visit with her pastor Monsignor Horan. She will meet with the current pastor, Father William Carsen after her radio interview. On Friday, her class is having a reunion in her honor. Fr. Jim wants her to meet his friend, Fr. Bob Reis, SJ, the President of McQuaid Jesuit High School in Rochester. Dierdre's senior year boyfriend, Erich Boyle, who was so great for her after her father's death, was a student at that school. She lost touch with him while she was in the Marines. He had escorted her to both their proms and was an emotional support for her during those sensitive months after her dad's death.

Uber took them to the Philadelphia Airport and to the Garvey Legal private Jet. The pilot came out to greet them while they were loading their luggage. "We were a little busy on the way home from the Medal Ceremony, and, of course, you were so busy with Mr. Garvey and your friends, we never got the chance to formerly meet." They shook hands and the pilot smartened up and saluted, "pleased to meet you, Colonel, Sir.....I mean ma'am."

Dierdre saluted in return and said, "at ease, soldier. I presume we are both well-retired."

"I am," said the pilot. "I served in the Air Force and was based at Rochester Airport."

"Great," said Dierdre. "Then you know the way."

The surprise was the attendant who brought lunch and wanted to take their drink order. Both turned down drinks. The gourmet salad was very satisfying.

As they were descending to land, Dierdre pointed out the spires of St. Patrick's Church, my home parish. "I lived a couple of blocks to the west. Rochester is a legitimate metropolis, but I got to know a lot of people playing soccer. Northwest Rochester was great place to grow in. I knew just about everyone in the region."

"How many games did you have to win to the championship?"

"Let me think. I think ten in league play and four payoffs to win the county, six to win the divisional playoff. The finals were almost a World Cup scene, in a big stadium on Roosevelt Island. There were celebrations, speeches, appearances of several members of the World Cup Women's Team, They were fun people. None of them were full of themselves and that tells me why they made a great team."

"We played the final against giant Erasmus High School, known as a cradle of intellectual students. Everybody knew I was a candidate for the All-State Team. Their goalie made a very snide remark about me during a radio

interview. My teammates were outraged. I used to forbid any negative emotions and focus on the joyful feeling. I told them to love the sport, love this game, and love each other. That way we'll win. We won that game 6 – 0. I scored three goals. I remember every one of them. I didn't play the last fifteen minutes of the game because I wanted the bench to experience playing in the biggest game of their lives."

"After the game, I was introduced to their goalie who was very humble by that time. I told her I was proud to be on such a big stage with her."

"The next day the All-State team was announced. I was named the captain and the Athlete of the Year."

"You had all those scholarships, and you didn't take them," said Tom. "Where would you have gone if you did accept a scholarship."

"Notre Dame, my favorite school. But, at that time, I just couldn't see myself in college playing soccer. If I did, at 32, I would probably be still playing, for an unenthusiastic pro team in New Jersey."

"However, I made the right choice. Steve Jobs told us that you can only connect the dots by looking backward. Choosing the Marines was a scary and spontaneous decision. I actually hated the Marines but after basic, I was assigned to computer school. But as I look back at the dots in my life I didn't necessarily choose wisely, but I chose well. My most recent dot is you, and she reached over to kiss him."

"The Marines probably have the best computer training in the world. A year later, they sent me to UNC at Wilmington, near the base, on their scholarship. I wasn't allowed to date nor was I allowed to play sports. The Marines wanted to protect their investment. If I didn't comply, I would have had to pay them back for the tuition and probably earn myself a dishonorable discharge. I took a full load of courses during the summers and holiday intersessions and received my degree in Computer Science in three years. During the following years, every branch of the Service needed my help for computer surveillance, mostly hacking. A lot of it was top secret and I did have a high-level security clearance."

"Wow! We touched down so gently, I didn't even realize we were down."

They thanked the pilot and said they would see him next Saturday afternoon.

They rented a car and set off for the Hilton Hotel. Dierdre drove since she knew the way. Tommy was a little overwhelmed by the luxuriousness of the hotel. Dierdre compared it to the palace the French Government placed her in when she was awarded the Croix de Guerre. They were going to take a nap and the evening was theirs to enjoy. And enjoy it they did, with a romantic dinner for two at the Hilton Dining Room.

On Tuesday morning, they began the tasks of their trip. They went to Michael Lynch's Law offices on the main street near St. Patrick's Church. All of her folios were neatly boxed. There were files on his desk with summaries of all the transactions of the last thirteen years. "

"There were no taxes on the awards," he said, "but the money earned by those awards was indeed taxable. All taxes are paid up to date. I told Mr. Garvey about the complexities of the taxes, and he wants me to send all of this material to his office, and he'll have his people make sense of it. By the way, you travel in rarified circles. David Garvey is known as the leading attorney in the country."

"He is my boss and a friend. Tommy and I had dinner with his family last Friday and we had lunch with him again on Sunday after Mass . I'm the Director of Security for Garvey Legal."

“He told me that you saved his life twice.”

“True but I had a lot of help from our friends including Tommy.”

“Mr. Lynch, I don’t know how to thank you.”

“Thanks aren’t necessary. I was glad to do it, especially when Msgr. Horan told me your story. We are going to see him later on. He is in a retirement home for priests not too far from here. He is so looking forward to seeing you again, the girl who put St. Patrick’s on the map. On the other hand, Fr. Carsen has no idea of the parish traditions or history. He wants to close the school.”

“Is student recruitment down?”

“No, the school is fiscally solvent. He just doesn’t believe that the parish should be saddled with a school. Wow! Cardinal Hughes based the greatest social transformation in history with the establishment of Catholic schools. He totally reformed the Irish population and salvaged the city of New York as well.”

“He is letting the school deteriorate so no one will want to come here.”

“Are you going to tell me he doesn’t accept Vatican II?”

“He gets as many things in Latin as he possible can. It also shows. Church attendance is less than half of what you and I remember.”

“I look forward to meeting him, then.”

“Dierdre, he is a very arrogant person.”

Mr. Lynch, I am a Marine Colonel, battle hardened and perhaps the most decorated soldier in the country. I am known throughout the country. I have President Biden’s private phone number. I can launch a public relations program that will make him wish he was still an altar boy. And we are going to see him this afternoon.”

Between clergy visits can we visit my parent’s grave.”

“Absolutely, I am taking you both to lunch on the way to see Msgr. Horan.”

The retirement home for priests was perhaps ten miles outside of the city. It was a very nice facility and Dierdre was impressed. There seemed to be a lot of activity among the priests. Some were playing board games, others were playing cards. They had an extensive and up-to-date library, and many priests were reading under direct light in comfortable chairs. Msgr. Horan came into the room piloting his own wheel chair. When he saw Dierdre he lit up like stadium lights. He pushed his wheel chair over to her, he stood up when he reached her to give her a long and fervent hug.

“It is such a blessing to be with you after all these years,” said Dierdre as tears welled up in her eyes matching the tears of the venerable cleric.

“Gentlemen, I want you to meet a famous parishioner and student from St. Patrick’s. We watched her on television last week when she received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Everyone stood up and applauded.

“Deirdre, introduce your friends”

“Thank you. He is my best friend and my fiancé. We’ll be married in September.” “His name is Tom Farrell. Again there was clapping, hoots and whistles. The elderly priests were definitely having a good time. Dierdre introduced Michael Lynch as a friend of Msgr. Horan.

“Michael, can you get me ride to the graduation.”

“Consider it done, Father. Someone will pick you up at 6:30 and bring you back after the graduation. Let’s go to the far end of the room so we can talk.” The room was large enough so that there was indeed privacy.

“Father, I am concerned about the school. Father Carsen seems to want to close it.”

“Aye, he does. Some of these younger guys are more concerned about how to correctly genuflect than embracing the mission they were ordained for.” The old pastor went on to tell the sad tale of change in the parish from genuine ministry to lavish life styles for the priests. He told a whole series of stories as an example. He told how laymen who were Eucharistic Ministers were dismissed and women lectors were as well. There are no altar girls. About half of the parish have moved on to other parishes.”

“Father, what are his vulnerabilities?”

“Diedre, you talk like a soccer coach, and you were a damn good one. Those are the right questions. He is full of himself. A few times he referred to himself as the Pope of the parish. He doesn’t have any lay input. He dissolved the Pastoral Council. To answer your question, he loves to be flattered and told how great he is. There are enough people around who see things his way. They are the flatterers who feed his constantly starving ego. All his decisions flow from that.”

“Well that tells me everything I need to know. I’m meeting with him this afternoon. I’ll try to flatter so he doesn’t cancel my role in the graduation. Well, thank you, Father Horan. I think I know what to do.”

“I know you well, Dierdre. I’m sure you will do what I would if I could.”

“Enough of this. Tell me about your military career. How did you get all those medals they are talking about?”

On the way home, they stopped at St. Gertrude’s Cemetery. It was nostalgic rather than sad visit. Dierdre’s prayer thanked her mother, whom she barely remembered, for the gift of life. She thanked her father for helping her to become the woman she is now. She remembers them every day of her life. She kissed her hand and laid it on the headstone. “She finished her prayer, mentioning that she didn’t know if she could visit the grave again, but that she would meet them in her prayers each evening.”

At St. Patrick’s Rectory, a secretary admitted them and placed them in a small office off the lobby entrance. They waited almost twenty minutes. When the priest finally arrived, it was obvious that he was awakened from a nap. He stopped in the secretary’s office and asked why she didn’t take care of this?

The Secretary responded that he had an appointment to meet with Col. O’Rourke, a graduate of our high school and a former parishioner who is the speaker at our graduation tomorrow. Col. O’Rourke has the highest SAT scores in the school’s history and was NY State Athlete of the year. Col. O’Rourke has been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. As the pastor walked out, the secretary smiled to herself, licked her finger, and made the mark of an imaginary score in the tense air.

He bolted into the office, where they were waiting, like a man on a mission. "I'm sorry to keep you waiting. The demands on a parish priest are never-ending. He went right to Michael Lynch. "Colonel, it is an honor to meet you. And this is your lovely wife."

"Oh no, Father. I'm Michael Lynch. I used to be the parish attorney."

"Why would the parish require an attorney?"

Michael passed over the question and directly introduced Dierdre as Col. O'Rourke. "This is Captain Tom Farrell, a Purple Heart awardee, and Dierdre's fiancé."

After picking up his face which had fallen to the level of the sash of his cassock, he asked if they wanted to get married here. "No," replied Dierdre. "We live in Philadelphia. We'll be married at our parish there. You are welcome to come in and concelebrate. It would be our honor if you did."

"Oh No, NO....I don't believe that such a thing is legal."

"Well the purpose of our visit is a courtesy call because I am the speaker at your graduation. I am an alum. We made the arrangement for this appointment months ago."

"I want to know what you are going to speak about. Do you have a copy of your speech?"

"Father, I am an accomplished public speaker. I speak from concepts. I don't know if you saw any of my speeches on television last week, but I can assure you there was no advanced copy, even for the President, my Commander-in-Chief."

"Oh, that immoral heretic."

Dierdre ignored the comment and stated that she wanted to thank the wonderful people of the parish and the community who were such a tremendous support to me after my father's tragic death. "I will also be at my class reunion on Friday evening. My friends and teammates were an incredible support."

"I don't intend to spend a lot of time on that, but I mean it from my heart, and it has to be said. This parish was an incredible community of love."

"I want to address the graduates about their experience here and in the future. I am blending some of the teaching of St. Ignatius with some of higher-level dictates of the military code."

"What is the Military Code?"

"I can liken it to Moral Theology for the military."

"You know Moral Theology?"

"Yes, I do. I also took courses in Moral Theology in college."

"I don't believe that lay people should be reading theology."

Another phrase to be ignored.

Michael chimed in, "Father, excuse me because of our delay here. we are running close to being late for our next appointment. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday evening. Thank you very much." Dierdre and Tommy both shook the priest's hand and thanked him for his time. The parish secretary who was listening wet

her finger again and marked another score. As he passed her office, the secretary heard the pastor muttering something about the laity becoming so contemptuous of the clergy.

As she walked to the car, Dierdre arm around Tommy's waist and pulled him to her.

"Tommy, you are a saint. Your tongue must be bleeding from biting it."

"You were fantastic, yourself, my dear. I was so proud of you. You are a real pro at diplomacy."

"Ah! Diplomacy is the dialogue of intellectual equals. This guy is sicker than even Fr. Horan thinks. I have a plan and I want to act on it quickly. I'll outline it to my classmates."

"You saw the enemy and already you have a plan to defeat him."

"Eh, it would be fun if the stakes weren't so high."

"Michael, we are dining with you to tomorrow evening, right?"

"Right as rain, Dierdre. Father Horan and a few friends from your era will join us. I'll brief you tomorrow."

"Good, this was a big day, a good day," said Dierdre. "It was wonderful to see Fr. Horan so feisty and alert."

"He has real insight and I think when he saw you, he felt like the trapped soldiers must have felt when they saw you coming."

"No one ever saw me coming. That was necessary to save my own life. My team and I relentlessly practiced stealth. I'll make some notes for the information I think I might need on our way to McQuaid Jesuit."

"That radio interview is intriguing. I'll go on at 4:40 PM, the home ride of the rush hour so we'll have good exposure. Also, radio doesn't have the same strict time slots that television has. If I'm interesting enough, I might get a lot of time. Radio jocks like conversation. It makes their job easy, and it is fun."

"Tonight is ours, Tommy. One of the great pizza parlors of the country is still here. After dinner we'll go up the mountain and make out under the stars."

"You make the best plans," said Tommy.

The next morning, Tom and Dierdre were ready for action. Michael picked them up at 7:00 to take them to the TV studio. The interview would be broadcast throughout the day on the various news programs. The interviewer had done his homework and had set up a fact sheet from which to question Dierdre.

"A native of Rochester is the most decorated soldier in the country and the first woman to receive the Medal of Honor. Col. Dierdre O'Rourke welcome to WROC." – TV."

"Thank you. I looked forward to being here. I may be the most decorated soldier in the country, but I am not the first female Medal of Honor winner. That honor belongs to Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, battlefield physician who routinely sneaked behind enemy lines to minister to our wounded troops during the Civil War. She was also captured by the Confederates and imprisoned in Virginia until she was liberated. I'm afraid that she won't be available for an interview."

"Wow, I don't know how I missed that information. Tell me the story of your medals."

“In the last two years of my 12 – year tour, I volunteered for Search and Rescue if I could train my own team of two women.”

The Croix de Guerre award resulted from rescuing a French soldier, a NATO soldier, who was severely wounded and trapped in a crossfire. Two of our soldiers died trying to rescue him. I knew that their machine gunner had a fourteen-inch clearance. I crawled out hugging the ground, reached the soldier and started pulling him back. I had only a few feet left to go, and my teammate took out the machine gunner. We were back to our trench and out of danger. I resuscitated him and started to dress his wounds. He was very badly injured. I called in a Marine Jet to take out the Taliban trench. I also called in a medivac chopper and carried him to the landing zone. He was in our base hospital until he recovered enough for transport to the military hospital in Germany. He is a wonderful guy with a family back in France. Apparently, he told his story to his superiors, and they awarded me the Croix de Guerre. The Secretary of the Navy recommended that I accept the honor. I never glossed the reports. ‘I came, I saw, I conquered.’ My team and I trained for every eventuality. We were a tight team. We slept in the same quarters, ate together, prayed together, and learned together. My team thought that going out in the field to find a lost group, knowing that there was likely to be a firefight, was like a day off.”

“What a wonderful story! How many battles did you have?”

Just about fifty. That number came from the Marine reports. I never really counted them. One of my ribbons signifies fifty firefights”

“I know that you grew up Rochester, that you were an all-state soccer player from tiny St. Patrick’s and that your team had an undefeated season winning the divisional state championship.”

“Actually we were all-over champions. We won all the divisions and were finalists against New York’s Erasmus High School whom we defeated in the final. I’m sorry to be so precise, but some of my teammates might be watching.”

“I read that you were called “the ladies from hell.”

“The Taliban called us that. Our troops called us “Angels from Heaven.” The Taliban actually had a campaign to ‘get the redhead.’”

“What are you doing in retirement.”

“My day job is Director of Security for Garvey Legal, Philadelphia’s largest Law firm. I volunteer two nights a week at the Jesuit Urban Mission as an Emergency Medical Technician. I also serve on The Board of Directors for the Jesuit Mission, and I am currently floating proposals for a massive building project to provide homes for the neglected underclass. The Jesuit Mission has become a major league operation and I am proud and grateful to be a part of it.”

“Is that where you saved 21 people in a massive fire?”

“Yes, I was part of the rescue. My fiancé and EMT partner, Tom Farrell, took the lead on that one. We were returning from the hospital after delivering a heart attack victim, when this building literally blew up in front of us.” The camera put up the photo from the Enquirer showing Dierdre coming out of a cloud of black smoke with Tommy carrying the baby he rescued.

“You don’t look like a warrior.”



"I'm not a warrior. We practiced hard to be smarter and more capable than the enemy. It worked. We were in fifty firefights and never got hurt. When we came home alive and unwounded, I think the brass thought we had an easy day. It wasn't until troopers started mustering out spoke of being rescued by us under some grim circumstances. That is when they decided to investigate. They held hearings and reviewed reports. One general, said that I made the extraordinary look so ordinary. By the way, each of my teammates received the Silver Star. No one does what we did alone. It is a little bit like playing soccer and reading your teammates mind because whatever was about to happen, we had already practiced over and over again."

"You are speaking at St. Patrick's graduation on Thursday. It was moved from the church to the City Center because thousands of people wanted to see you in person."

"Yes, I am a proud and loyal alum. I wanted the opportunity to thank my classmates and many friends and citizens of Rochester who were such a great support after my Dad's death. I never thought it was going to be such a big deal. I intend to focus most of the program on the graduating students."

"Colonel Dierdre O'Rourke, thank you for joining us this morning. A native daughter of Rochester, we look forward to hearing more from you and about you."

After the show Dierdre, Michael, and Jeremiah O'Connor, the newscaster, shared a welcome cup coffee.

Michael was ruminating and finally asked Jerry if he knew the O'Connor's on Watson Street.

"Yes," said Jeremiah, "They would be my parents. They have since moved to Arizona. And yourself, are you still in the parish?"

"No, we go to Mass on the other side of town. Most of the parish has moved on. The church is largely empty on Sunday except for being filled with incense. Some day he is going to trigger the sprinklers."

"Would you come back if you had a favorable pastor and a Vatican II mission?"

"I don't know. I would have to examine it carefully."

"Where did you go to high school, asked Dierdre?"

"McQuaid Jesuit."

"We're on our way up there now. We be seeing Fr. Reis."

"A great guy. You'll like him."

"You're a nice guy. I'll take your word for it" said Dierdre. "Thank you for a marvelous early morning."

"By the way, that interview will be rebroadcast at least a dozen times including a few over the weekend. I owe great thanks to you. It was a terrific interview, good television."

"Good, I am formulating a plan to save St. Patrick's School and the parish. Your station could be a big help. I have your card and I'll be back in touch."

They made small talk conversation in the car on their way to McQuaid. Dierdre, I have a good idea where you are going with this."

"I have some more resources to collect. But yes, things are starting to fall into place. Michael, I'll drive on the way back and you can read my notes."

"What is the Bishop like?"

"A good man, cautiously progressive and carefully conservative. The resources he has to work with are diminishing. I think we got our pastor because there was no one else available."

"So he would be reasonable if we could help him out."

"I would guess, yes."

McQuaid looked institutional until we pulled up and the building had a very attractive personality. The place was filled with young men moving throughout the building. Classes were actually changing. There was a Receptionist/Administrative Assistant station in the middle of the lobby where we were directed to Fr. Reis's office.

"Ah, there you are, right on time. Thank you for that. Fr. Jim described you quite well. He might have a talent for facial recognition."

"Say hello to Michael Lynch, our attorney."

"You're not going to sue me, are you?"

"No." said Michael. "I was taking care of Dierdre's affairs while she was in the military. I'm just quarterbacking her home visit. She is the Commencement Speaker for St. Patrick's Graduation at the City Center.

"I read about that. There are no tickets left for a 3000-seat arena. Congratulations on the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor." .

"Thank you. It didn't come easily, and I wasn't expecting it."

Before Dierdre could explain there was a knock at the door. Fr. Bob invited the knocker in and there was the head of the Social Studies Department, Erich Boyle.

"Dierdre looked up and screamed, "Erich, Erich and ran over to give him as big a hug as she could muster. "I never would have thought I would see you here. It must be the work of the Spirit. Wow! Meet my fiancé, Tom Farrell, and our attorney, Michael Lynch. What are you doing here?"

"I have four boys who need a Jesuit education, so I came here to teach Social Studies. It is the only way I could afford it."

"Four boys, wow! Tommy, we'll have to catch up real fast."

Tommy laughed, "there is only one speed." Fr. Bob laughed.

"I hope you are coming to the reunion of Friday."

"I wouldn't miss it for the world."

"Well, I guess you are old friends," said Fr. Reis.

"That is an understatement. Erich helped me pull my life together after my father died when we were both seniors in high school. In fact, I was his date for the prom here."

“And I was her date for the Prom at St. Patrick’s.”

“Dierdre had a scholarship to every school in the country. She was the Athlete of the Year and led her team to the NY State Girls Soccer Championship. She also is the only student in her school’s history to have a perfect SAT score.”

Fr. Bob said, “I don’t think any student here had a perfect score.”

“Do you work for Jim Keenan?”

“No! I serve on the Board of the Jesuit Urban Mission I am also an EMT volunteer a couple of nights a week. Tommy usually rides with me. He was a New York Fire Department EMT and had high level Army training. I had similar training with the Marines.”

“How many are working there?”

“There are 40 full time post college residential volunteers, the staff at the clinic and administrators, a good guess would be 95.”

“A clinic did you say.”

“Yes, quality health care was an issue in the region, so we opened an Urgent Care Center. Two doctors and a nurse practitioner see approximately 80 to 100 patients a day.”

“How do they pay for it?”

“Fr. Jim founded an insurance company.”

Dierdre was enjoying this. “Tom is an EMT volunteer, but his day job is Job Development, and he works with the homeless. In fact there are 40 formerly homeless veterans fully employed and living in our apartments. Two hundred kids are in an after-school homework program and are being tutored by our volunteers.”

Our current Executive Director is a UPenn Ph.D, a Black girl who was an All-American Basketball player and the valedictorian of her class at Immaculata, and one of my closest friends.

She was chosen for the job by another of my closest friends who started the Jesuit Urban Mission with Fr. Jim, Theresa Malone. She became known as Mother Theresa throughout Philadelphia. She worked there for ten years, got the program started and financed. She is responsible for the graduate volunteer program, starting the clinic, the after-school program. Everything was in motion when June Garvey took over. She led a city-wide Gala that raised \$4 million, and June has taken it to the next level. I am working on an urban renewal program for affordable housing for the working poor of Northeast Philadelphia. One more thing, we own our own ambulance.”

I never thought that such a project was in Jim’s wheelhouse. I know our Provincial gave him a lifetime assignment and Jim has made many friends there.

Dierdre pointed out that you can move the world with a little help from your friends and he is supportive of every project. “We even have a spirituality component for the volunteers that is open to everyone and everyone voluntarily participates.”

“And you and Tom moved into this?”

"We all met in church," said Dierdre.

"By the way, I was interviewed by Jeremiah O'Connor today. He spoke very highly of you."

"Ah, a favorite alum. Thank you for visiting today. It has been enlightening. I am going to call Jim tonight. He has been hiding you and changing the world at the same time. And Tom, congratulations to both of you. I look forward to your wedding announcement."

"Come on down and concelebrate. I invited Fr. Carsen, but he thought concelebration was illegal."

"Yes, well he would."

"And Michael, it is good to see you again. Take good care of these guys".

On the way back into the city Michael read the list that Dierdre drew up.

Recruit Msgr. Horan to make direct contact with the Archbishop. He will be armed to the teeth with a folio of data which we can provide.

"Have an Archdiocesan representative pull a surprise visit to observe the priest's residence and determine who paid for it."

"Check for changing demographics." (Dierdre will do that),

-Number of Baptisms over the course of ten years,

-Number of Confirmations,

-Number of Marriages,

-Mass attendance compared with five local parishes,

-Audit the parish books.

-State of the schools allowed to deteriorate. (Michael can obtain from the principal).

"I need to know what Father does for recreation. Is he visiting people in the parish or outside the parish with inordinate frequency? What does he do on his day off?

"Who does he hangout with, who are his friends?"

"What do you think, Michael?"

"How are you going to get this information?"

"I am Director of Security for Philadelphia's largest and most respected Law firm. I have all kinds of investigators to get this information?"

"Is all of this legal?"

"It has never been challenged in Court going back way before my time. There will be a publicity component to my plan if it is needed. The Archbishop has to know that he is sitting on a possible explosive scandal. Of course, everything should be done quietly to avoid a scandal."

“The Archbishop should look for an energetic young Vatican II priest who has a sense of mission and service and who will reinstate the laity’s role in the administration of the sacraments and the administration of the parish. He should have two assistants from among retired priests who can help out with Mass and Sacraments. Possibly, we can recruit a Jesuit.”

Michael Lynch let Dierdre and Tom off at the Hilton Hotel promising to pick them up for dinner at 7:00 P.M.. He wore a grin as wide as wide Lake Erie.

They went upstairs and relaxed for the rest of the afternoon. They had cheeseburgers sent up for lunch.

Tommy was full of questions about how they were going to accomplish their plan. Dierdre explained that they could get the information required in a couple of hours with the help of John Garvey. Dierdre also wanted to checkout John’s fabled computer skills.

Dierdre told Tommy about her Marine training in Computer Science followed by her degree in Computer Science at the University of North Carolina. She still had high level security clearance because she was considered a consultant to the Marines. They hadn’t called on her yet.

Dierdre had resolved to be very demure at the lynch’s dinner party. She would sit back and observe, be politely interactive with the other guests and, listen carefully to as many conversations as she can. Four of the other guests were friends of Dierdre’s dad. Since she was the guest of honor, she had to compromise on her plan, but listened well anyway.

She talked about her life as a student and how difficult that was after her dad’s death. She had already completed her SAT’s and while quietly elated at her perfect score, it wasn’t enough to dispel the darkness of grief. Her friend, Erich, was an iron-clad support. They had frequent visits to the pizza parlor that she and Tommy visited last night. Erich was a constant comfort. He seemed to be the only person in her life that wasn’t afraid of her grief. They went for long walks, and movies, and talked for hours. They mingled with their mutual friends, attended basketball games, the school play, and went to weekend parties as if it was normal. After her birthday, Dierdre was 18 the month her father had died, she took on all the responsibility of the funeral. Msgr. Horan had introduced her to Michael Lynch, the parish attorney who helped her sift through her father’s financial affairs. He was the quarterback of the effort to establish a fortune in corporate settlements.

She was the captain of the soccer team and went to her coach with the dream of an impossible goal, to win the NY State Women’s Soccer Championship. The coach bought into her plan for on the field coaching. She wanted her team to be the fastest in the league. They needed to be in tip top physical shape for the test of running at top speed for ninety minutes. She wanted them to be able to kick the ball with both legs so hard it would rip the net. They went through plays. They went through offense drills so the defense would learn how to defend. Whenever Dierdre made a mistake on the field, she would stop play and rehearse until she had it perfect. Her teammates appreciated that.

They won their first five games and the girls started to believe in themselves. Before they realized what was happening, they were reading each other’s minds. They knew where the ball was, where it was supposed to be, and how to pass and score.

When the other team had the ball, they knew exactly how to defend against the attack. This strategy was something else. Now they were playing against the best of the best in New York State. They won their league championship and then won their league playoff games. In the next round, they won all the interdivisional

games leading to their triumph on Ricker's Island in New York City. They swore that Dierdre taught them to read minds.

That helped her a lot. There were proms, graduation and her friends started preparing for college. Finally, Dierdre called Notre Dame and gracefully declined their offer. She told them she was considering joining the military. Her friends and their families were in shock. After Basic Training, she had an administrative desk job. The Marines noticed her high-level computer skills and offered her a Marine scholarship to the University of North Carolina where she was a day student residing at Camp Lejeune. She was required to sign up for another tour after College. She stayed for three more tours.

The Marine experience was good for her. She became one of the top computer analysts. For her last tour of duty, she asked permission to train her own Search and Rescue team. She started to train two women who hated her. Dierdre wanted them prepared for every battle contingency. On their first outing her teammates were careless and it almost cost them their lives until Dierdre rescued them. That night they apologized and Dierdre accepted their apology. "I can't guarantee that we won't get hurt, or even killed but I can guarantee that if you pull that kind of stunt, we will all be dead. The lesson was learned. The women were named, The Ladies from Hell, by the Taliban and Dierdre had a price on her head for almost two years. They were involved in fifty operations in those two years and saved hundreds of American and NATO troops. She always alerted her team. "If you see me do something bazaar, know that I know exactly what I am doing. I have a unique confidence in myself, and I know exactly where you are."

The heroics were recorded as normal. When they returned to base unhurt, it was the reaction of the brass that they had an easy day. It wasn't until troops went for their exit interview that the brass learned of Dierdre's heroics.

Being in her home town restored all these memories. She knew her family would be proud.

During the dinner hosted by the Lynch family, Dierdre tuned into all the conversation about the state of the parish. Her rescue preparations were confirmed.

She was very grateful for the company of friends of her parents and Msgr. Horan. She apologized for drifting off in reminiscence. She was looking forward to tomorrow.

The next evening was chaotic. Every one of the three thousand seats in the arena was filled. A hush came over the crowd as exactly at 7:30 the school band started playing, Pomp and Circumstance. The students proudly processed to their seats on the floor of the auditorium.

Fr. Carsen said a few words of welcome. He lamented that the event should have been in the parish church, a remark that left three thousand people scratching their heads.

Awards were announced and students proudly walked up to receive them from Fr. Carsen.

After the diploma awards. Msgr. Horan was assisted to the podium by Michael Lynch.

He said that that he was the luckiest because every graduate of St. Patrick's is special and all of them are my favorites.

“I have a special fondness for our speaker today because I baptized her, prepared her for her First Communion and then her Confirmation. She graduated from St. Patrick’s Grammar and High School. She is the only person in our school’s history to earn perfect SAT score. She led her our women’s soccer team to an undefeated season and the New York State Championship. She was Captain of the All-State Team, the State’s leading goal scorer, and received the Athlete of the Year Award after defeating giant Erasmus High School in New York City. She broke Notre Dame’s heart when she told them she was entering military service as a Marine. She received a Marine Scholarship to the University of North Carolina, where she received her degree in Computer Science and graduated as Valedictorian. She distinguished herself in combat and was awarded a ribbon for fifty missions, the

Bronze Star, the Silver Star, The French Croix de Guerre, France’s highest military honor for rescue of a French NATO soldier in the midst of an intense fire fight, and the Congressional Medal of Honor, our nation’s highest military honor, for heroism above and beyond the call of duty. She and her team were credited with saving 200 NATO and American soldiers in Afghanistan. She holds a high level of security clearance and remains a computer consultant on call for the Marines. It is my thrill and honor to introduce, Colonel Dierdre O’Rourke.”

The lights flickered as the crowd stood up and roared in unison. Dierdre kissed the elderly priest on the cheek. When he sat down he said he wouldn’t wash his face for the rest of his life.

Diedre patiently stood by the podium waiting for crowd to settle down. Even the students were standing to clap.

Finally, it did stop, and everyone was seated.

I want to thank everyone for this reception tonight. I was asked to wear my uniform tonight and I think this is the last time I will ever wear it.

I want to introduce my fiancé, Thomas Farrell, United States Army, a Purple Heart Awardee. Tommy stood and waved to the crowd.

The next formal thing I will wear is a wedding gown. We’ll be married in September. Again thunderous applause.

“I wanted to come here tonight for two reasons. After my father’s tragic death. I was lost in grief. Even our soccer triumph wasn’t enough. My friends and classmates were so wonderful, I don’t think I could have survived without them. The entire Rochester community was such an incredible support. I think many were disappointed when I joined the Marines. It was not a slight to you, and I wasn’t running away from anything. The devastation of my father’s death just wouldn’t leave. It wasn’t that I didn’t have love. I had the love of so many in the community and in my school. I had the greatest boyfriend that any high school girl could ever dream for. I couldn’t see myself as a college student and an athlete. I needed something bigger than myself, bigger than my grief. So I dedicated myself to my country. The Marines were good to me and all these ribbons and medals state that the feeling is mutual.

“I live and work in Philadelphia for a large legal firm as Director of Security. I volunteer, with Tom, as an EMT for the Jesuit Urban Mission in Philadelphia.

Thank you, all of you good people. You have saved my life. I have had the opportunity to save hundreds and you share in that victory.

I'm not going to share any war stories. Watch my interview with Jeremiah O'Connor, a former St. Patrick's parishioner on WROC – TV over the weekend.

I came here to honor you, the St. Patrick's graduates, and congratulate you.

Twelve years ago, my classmates and I processed into St. Patrick's Church, took our seats, and began our graduation in much the same way we began it tonight. It was an exciting evening. I received my Presidential Citation personally signed by George W. Bush. Our NY State Championship Trophy was already locked in our school's trophy case. My four senior teammates received athletic scholarships.

I gave the valedictory speech, but I don't remember it now.

I went off to join the Marines.

**I will share stories of my life in the context of the ever-relevant teaching from St. Ignatius Loyola. These remarks are directed to the new St. Patrick's alums. However, they have relevance for all of us.**

***Be alert for the presence of God everywhere you look. God is to be found in everything.***

He is all around us, in the beauty of nature, in the in the eyes of every person you speak with, even in the turmoil of your own troubles. Your acknowledgement of that and your response to that is real prayer. I thought, I knew, that God was walking beside me on our search and rescue missions. I was never a big fan of fighting and bloodshed. I was a big fan of getting trapped soldiers home to their spouses and children. My faith in God was a big part of all of that. You are leaving childhood and entering into a grown-up world. The more you are aware of the presence of God, the better off you will be.

Fr. Carsen left muttering something about not wanting to be exposed to such heresy.

***Act as if everything depended on you. Trust as if everything depended on God.***

My life as a marine was easy for the first eight years. I had administrative duties. I learned Search and Rescue as part of my curriculum at UNC. The Marines wanted to get their money's worth. My teammates and I used to pray together every day. Every night I would read from St. Ignatius Spiritual Exercises. A lot of our Search and Rescue personnel were seriously wounded and several, sadly, killed. I decided that I wanted my team to not only survive but to be the best am most effective team possible. The harder we worked, the more our confidence grew. We were determined to avoid injury and death, We worked very hard to be in tip top condition. My athletic ability has been mentioned a few times tonight. I pulled off some hair-raising scenarios to save our soldiers and I wouldn't allow my teammates to do the things I did. I had supreme confidence, even in the very face of death, because I always trusted as if everything depended on God and that the talent he gave me would not be wasted.

***Read, study, never stop learning; never stop growing.***

Examen your life every day, and frequently during the day. When I went to visit Msgr. Horan, I was impressed with the library at the priest's retirement residence. As I looked around their common room, I was further impressed by so many priests who were reading.. Read everything. If you like history, we have thousands of years of it that you can read about. I like historical novels. Reading is a source of learning. Reading is a source of fun. Remember the examen that I mentioned. That is an important component of Ignatian spirituality. Start with examining the good things you have done during your waking hours. Thank God for the grace to do that. When you have thoroughly explored that, you can look at the things you could have done better. Do that



once a day or even several times a day. It is a way of confronting yourself. "Why would I do that?" you ask. Try it and you'll answer your own question.

***Be men and women for others.***

This is both a motto and a philosophy of life. God is social, Father, Son, and Spirit. God is love. God and the interactions of God are eternal love. He created us in his image. It is with this love that we choose our spouses. It is with this love that we will raise our children. We are told to love our neighbor, Who is our neighbor?. EVERYBODY.

As a Marine, I lived in a corps community. We were closer than Monks in a Monastery. I'm wearing my uniform for the last time tonight. But for the rest of my life I will carry in my memory my Rochester friends, my classmates, my teammates, the men and women I served with in the Marines especially the hundreds whose lives I helped save with my Search and Rescue team. Especially my Search and Rescue team. They were magnificent when it counted. There is something special about the people who are with you when you are staring death in the face. I experienced that before when tiny St. Patrick's met and defeated giant Erasmus High School for the New York State Championship. Our team was magnificent. You and your classmates are magnificent. St. Patrick's has academically shaped you in the same way it academically shaped me. You have the social consciousness to fit into any school and group of students. I hope that someday, in a quiet moment, you will stop and remember each other. Surely the school's Department of Institutional Advancement will not lose track of you. (Laughter in the crowd)

Think of each other; remember each other; stay in touch with each other. Tomorrow evening I will be in at a reunion of my classmates and teammates. I hope that someday in the future, you will be saying the same thing.





## O' Donovan Rossa, Glasnevin, 1915

As we mark the milestones that led up to the Proclamation of the Irish Republic on Easter Monday 1916, our centenary remembrances note the seminal role played by *Ireland's "exiled children in America."*

The conspiratorial élite of the IRB (Fenians) who brought you the Easter Rising had their beginning in New York, when seven 1848 exiles, meeting in the New York City law office of Michael Doheny (Chairman, **Emmet Monument Association**), to play their part in the future liberation of Ireland. Their letter home led to the formation, in Dublin, on Saint Patrick's Day 1858, of the **Irish Republican Brotherhood** (IRB), the American cognate of which was called, by John O'Mahony, the **Fenian Brotherhood**. One of the leading lights of the 1860s IRB, in Ireland and Britain, was **John Devoy**, who was exiled to America in 1871. He joined **Clan na Gael**, and led them into alignment with the IRB in 1877. Over the years a number of leading Irish nationalists came to New York to consult with Devoy, including Pádraic Pearse, Roger Casement and Joseph Mary Plunkett. However, **John Devoy's main man was Tom Clarke**.

Tom Clarke was an IRB man and "Fenian prisoner" who moved to Brooklyn in 1898, and went to work for John Devoy in Clan na Gael. In 1907 Devoy sent Clarke on **a mission, to prepare Ireland for a Rising** against English occupation and rule.

The IRB was, secretly, behind the formation of the Irish Volunteers in November 1913. Working in the shadows, **Tom Clarke, with his protégé Seán Mac Diarmada** (Gaelic Leaguer and AOH man), selected, from the IRB, and the Irish Volunteers, the conspiratorial élite who would join them to form the **Military Committee of the IRB**, Pádraic Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt and Joseph Mary Plunkett (later joined, in 1916, by James Connolly of the Irish Citizen Army, and Tomás MacDonagh, who would facilitate the involvement of the Hibernian Rifles of the AOH American Alliance) – **the Rising planners**.

The two most formidable Irish revolutionaries in America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were **John Devoy** and his fellow Fenian and Clan na Gael and IRB man, **Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa**, old friends, who went into exile to New York on the same ship, the *SS Cuba*, in 1871. Rossa, organizer of the 1880s dynamite campaign (which he ran from New York), died in June 1915. When **Tom Clarke** learned of Rossa's death, he cabled Devoy to send Rossa's body home, at once.

The funeral, procession and subsequent burial of Rossa in Dublin's **Glasnevin Cemetery**, 1<sup>st</sup> August **1915**, were choreographed by **Tom Clarke**, with the Irish Volunteers, in uniform, on parade. Clarke assigned Tomás MacDonagh to handle the logistics and operations, and he asked Pearse to deliver the **graveside oration**. **Pádraic Pearse**, in his Irish Volunteer uniform, delivered one of the most stirring and memorable speeches in Irish history:

### Oration at the Grave of O'Donovan Rossa Pádraic Pearse, Lá Lughnasa 1915

The oration concludes:

*... This is a place of peace, sacred to the dead, where men should speak with all charity and with all restraint but I hold it a Christian thing, as O'Donovan Rossa held it, to hate evil, to hate untruth, to hate oppression; and, hating them, to strive to overthrow them. Our foes are strong and wise and wary; but, strong and wise and wary as they are, they cannot undo the miracles of God who ripens in the hearts of young men the seeds sown by the young men of a former generation. And the seed sown by the young men of '65 and '67 are coming to their miraculous ripening today.*

*Rulers and Defenders of Realms had need to be wary if they would guard against such processes. Life springs from death: and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The Defenders of this Realm have worked well in secret and in the open. They think that they have pacified Ireland. They think that they*

*have purchased half of us and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything, think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! — they have left us our Fenian dead, and, while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace. †*

## ON THIS DAY IN IRISH HISTORY -AUGUST

1st

- 1906 - The Catholic hierarchy rule out mixed education at Trinity College, Dublin.
- 1915 - Funeral of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, at which Patrick Pearse gives an oration.
- 1969 - A huge rally outside the GPO in Dublin protests events in Northern Ireland.
- 1980 - Eighteen people die in the Buttevant Rail Disaster.

3rd

- 1916 - Roger Casement hanged for treason.

5th

- 1969 - Severe sectarian rioting in Belfast.

7th

- 1957 - A war memorial in Limerick is blown up.
- 1986 - Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the DUP, is arrested for illegal assembly after a Loyalist mob takes over a village in County Monaghan.

8th

- 1980 - Ten people die in a hotel fire at Bundoran.

9th

- 1971 - Internment without trial is introduced in Northern Ireland.

11th

- 1927 - Fianna Fáil TDs join the Dáil for the first time.
- 1950 - At a meeting of the European Consultative Assembly in Strasbourg, Irish representatives vote against the European army proposed by Winston Churchill.

12th

- 1898 - James Connolly publishes the first copy of the Workers' Republic newsletter.
- 1946 - A plane carrying 23 French Girl Guides crashes in the Wicklow Mountains.

13th

- 1931 - Business resumes in the Four Courts following damage caused in the Civil War.
- 1969 - The Taoiseach Jack Lynch says on television that Ireland 'can no longer stand by' given the situation in Northern Ireland.
- 1995 - Gerry Adams tells a rally in Belfast that the IRA 'haven't gone away'.

14th

- 1903 - Wyndham Land Act passed, offering incentives to landlord to sell their estates.

15th

- 1838 - Government introduces relief work and a reduction in tithes for the poor.
- 1843 - Repeal meeting at Tara.
- 1969 - A night of violence and arson in Belfast. Sinn Féin calls for UN intervention and the boycott of British goods.
- 1998 - Real IRA bomb at Omagh kills 29 people.

16th

- 1879 - Land League of Mayo founded at Castlebar.
- 1969 - British soldiers are deployed in Belfast.
- 1982 - The Attorney General Patrick Connolly resigns after a wanted killer is found at his house.

17th

1922 - Dublin Castle is formally handed over to the IRA by the British.

1969 - Northern Ireland protesters clash with the Garda Síochána in Dublin.

18th

1911 - The British House of Lords loses its veto power beyond two years, making Home Rule possible.

19th

1989 - 10,000 people march in Dublin calling for Britain's withdrawal from Northern Ireland.

20th

1888 - Christian Brothers College founded in Cork.

21st

1962 - Former US President Eisenhower arrives in Belfast.

1970 - The Social Democratic and Labour Party is founded in Northern Ireland.

22nd

1922 - Michael Collins is killed in an ambush at Béal na Bláth.

23rd

1921 - Stormont Castle agreed as the Parliament building for Northern Ireland.

27th

1928 - Ireland becomes a signatory of the Kellogg Peace Pact.

1969 - The B-Specials begin to hand over their guns. British Home Secretary James Callaghan visits Belfast.

1979 - The IRA kill Lord Mountbatten, his grandson and the grandson's friend; on the same day, an IRA ambush at Warrenpoint kills 18 British soldiers.

28th

1835 - St. Vincent's Ecclesiastical Seminary opened at Castleknock.

1930 - Rembrandt painting found in an Irish cottage is authenticated.

31st

1994 - IRA announces a ceasefire.