

## Press Release

7 August 2007

### **Major Player in Peace Process, Martin Mansergh TD, Gives St. Oliver Plunkett Lecture**

**Dr. Martin Mansergh**, TD for Tipperary South, and a major player in the Peace Process will deliver the St. Oliver Plunkett lecture on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2007 at 7.30pm on *Tolerance or Militancy? Attitudes regarding the role of religion in State and Society in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century* as part of the West Belfast's Féile an Phobail.

Fr. Martin Magill, Parish Priest of St. Oliver Plunkett Church discusses the relevance of the lecture in today's society:

*"I am delighted that Martin Mansergh, who is a member of the Church of Ireland, has agreed to give this year's lecture. The issue of state and religion is extremely topical at the moment not only from a national but international perspective.*

*Martin has significant experience in politics and in the past was responsible for dialogue with political parties and Church intermediaries which has undoubtedly provided him with a personal insight into prevalent issues. Martin's lecture follows in the footsteps of previous speakers such as Rev. Ken Newell, then Moderator of the Presbyterian Church and Archbishop Seán Brady, Catholic Primate of All-Ireland."*

Welcoming the lecture, Glen Phillips, Chair of St. Oliver Plunkett Parish Council adds:

*"We are expecting a wide variety of people from Belfast and further a field to come along to the lecture. Already we have seen interest being shown locally from members of the Church of Ireland, people who follow politics in the 26 counties and those with an interest in the history of the peace process. It promises to be a thought provoking lecture, given Martin's academic studies and current working environment. The event is free to the general public and I would encourage people to arrive early in order to be seated."*

Dr. Mansergh's lecture will be followed by an audience question and answer session and light refreshments. Doors open at 7.00pm, St. Oliver Plunkett Church, Glenveagh Drive, Lenadoon, Belfast. For further information on the event log onto [www.stolivers.org](http://www.stolivers.org)

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#### **Notes to Editors**

#### **Dr. Martin Mansergh - Personal Details**

Born in England, 1946. Married with five children. Son of Tipperary-born Irish historian Nicholas Mansergh and mother Diana. Educated at King's School, Canterbury, and Christ Church, Oxford (PPE) M.A., D Phil. (18th c. Pre-Revolutionary French history). Co-owner with brother of a farm with beef and suckler herd

enterprise. Studied politics, philosophy and economics in Oxford, and obtained Doctorate in French history. Entered Department of Foreign Affairs by open civil service competition in 1974. Promoted First Secretary 1977. Worked on European issues, and served 2 ½ years in Germany. Former Head of Research with Fianna Fáil and Special Adviser to An Taoiseach.

**Notes** Elected to Dáil Éireann May 2007.

## **Political Record**

- Member of Post Office Philatelic Advisory Committee.
- Author of the paper, which formed the basis of negotiations leading to formation of the Fianna Fáil-Labour Coalition 1992-94.
- Member of four-person negotiating team to put together and later review the Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrats 'Action Programme for the Millennium' in 1997.
- Alternate on the Forum for Europe.
- Regular speaker at conferences and public gatherings.
- Responsible for dialogue with Sinn Féin leadership and with Church intermediaries, including those in touch with Unionist and Loyalist leaderships, prior to first and second IRA ceasefires.
- Worked on text of what subsequently became known as Hume-Adams and the Downing Street Declaration.
- Member with Noel Dempsey of drafting Committee of Forum for Peace and Reconciliation.
- Co-chair of British-Irish Constitutional Sub-Group 1994.
- Member of Delegation and Steering Group for Good Friday Agreement negotiations.
- Conducted discussions with IRSP prior to INLA ceasefire.
- Martin has accompanied An Taoiseach on visits to the White House and Downing Street. Winner with Fr. Reid and Rev Roy Magee of Tipperary Peace Prize. Awarded a Civic Reception, Tipperary UDC, May 1998.

## **Message**

'Some of the issues I have been involved with over the years, apart from Northern Ireland, include: inner city renewal (1982): consultations with Churches and others on pro-life amendment: the beginnings of social partnership 1986-87: agricultural policy (mid-1980s): the development of the EU under successive treaties as well as maintenance of Irish neutrality: the expansion of Overseas Development Assistance since 1992: the merits of Fianna Fáil adopting the national minimum wage during the last Election: economic and tax strategy, including tax credits: the merits of reinstating the full Christmas bonus to Social Welfare recipients: the merits of public transport investment: historical and cultural projects, like the Pearse family home, the Irish College in Paris, the Boyne battle site and Cathedral restorations.

"I try to respond helpfully to representations I receive from organisations and individuals North and South, including those from Tipperary. I assisted Noel Davern and local company to secure funding for the Excel Heritage Centre project to go ahead, helped some local schools and sports organisations to access grants, supported restoration of the 1848 Warehouse, Ballingarry, as well as dealing occasionally with individual social welfare and agricultural grants problems."

For further information on this press release or to arrange a media interview please contact Anna Shiels, Press & Marketing Consultant on 07740076229 or e-mail [info@annashiels.com](mailto:info@annashiels.com)