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2017 – 2019

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NYS Freedom For All Ireland

August 18, 2017

Sisters,

I am honored to serve as your NYS FFAI Chair for the 2017-2019 term. I want to take this opportunity to thank our worthy NYS President, Jackie Clute for appointing me to this position.

What a fantastic convention in Buffalo! Thanks to our Sisters in Niagara and Erie we enjoyed such wonderful hospitality. We also had a great FFAI Committee Meeting where we discussed the need for increased participation and the need to work towards improved communication with the AOH regarding FFAI Concerns and the Christmas Appeal. While I have provided the breakdowns from the LAOH at the NYS level and National Level in my last report, to date we do not have the final breakdown from the AOH regarding the amounts sent to each group. National FFAI Chair, Mary T. Leathem has contacted the AOH for this information several times and we hope to get that final report to distribute soon.

We concluded our Committee meeting with a very moving slideshow sent to us by Fr. Gary Donegan, CP, Ardoyne, Belfast. The slideshow depicted the pain and the progress, the anguish and the hope that has been the story in Ardoyne and across the North for decades. While there is peace, there is still so much to overcome regarding equality, employment, justice and poverty. I am working on getting a copy of that slideshow made available so that Colleen can post it to our NYS website to allow members to download it to present it at a division or county meeting, or simple for their own personal viewing.

I had a brief meeting with my AOH counterpart, Martin Galvin and discussed the role of the LAOH in the FFAI Appeal. Martin and I have many things in common including the need to educate, communicate and provide information to our delegation regarding the civil rights situation, the impact of Brexit on the communities in the North, and the need to remain diligent when it comes to policies imposed not only by the UK, but by our own Government.

One example of this need for renewed diligence is a piece of legislation that has caused concern regarding civil and human rights in the North. The US House of Representatives recently passed The Financial Choice Act. The bill is now with the Senate. This could undermine the strength and enforcement of the MacBride Principles. As many of you know, the MacBride Principles were fought for by Father Sean McManus, CP and the Irish National Caucus, and were passed in 1984 to allow for small investors to propose company resolutions including fair hiring

practices in companies they hold stock in. This was one of the mechanisms which forced companies in Northern Ireland to begin to hire Catholics. A recent article in the Irish Echo outlines the impact of the Financial Choice Act on the MacBride Principles: <http://irishecho.com/2017/05/maloney-goes-into-battle-for-macbride/>

McManus has described the Hensarling bill as a “radical, extremist assault on shareholder advocacy.” He said in a statement: “Currently, and for many years, one could submit a shareholder resolution provided one had for at least one year \$2,000 worth of shares. However, if the extremist changes are passed into law, it would mean, for one example, to submit a resolution to Apple, one would need to own, for three years shares worth \$7.5 Billion.

I have been advised by Mary T. that the Christmas Appeal will be starting and ending earlier than in the past. The procedure will be the same as last year. All funds collected will need to be sent directly to our LAOH National Chair Mary T. at the following address.

**Mary T. Leathem
37 Dormay Lane
Troy, NY 12182**

When submitting your check to Mary T, please indicate the name, number and associated county for your Division, what group you are earmarking your donations for and amounts of each earmark. Please send a copy of that correspondence to me via email or snail mail. The AOH National Chair has assured Mary that the beneficiary applications will be updated to reflect the LAOH name and Logo. Please check the AOH National Website for more information on the groups that have been approved in the past. These will most likely be approved again this year.

Here are the relevant dates:

September 1, 2017 – FFAI Christmas Appeal Kicks Off

December 15, 2017 – Application Deadline for groups requesting FFAI Funds

February 15, 2018 – Deadline for all funds to be collected and in the hands of the National Chair

March 2018 – Disbursement of FFAI Funds to the approved groups

I have been asked by our National President to participate on a newly formed LAOH FFAI National Committee consisting of several LAOH State FFAI chairs and chaired by Mary T. The Committee will work to draft recommendations for improvements to the Freedom For All Ireland program and processes both in the LAOH as well as collaboratively with the AOH. I appreciate this opportunity and will keep you posted.

I look forward to serving the NYS delegation as the FFAI chairperson, please contact me if you have any questions or need any information on how to get your divisions more involved in FFAI. I do a fair amount of travelling around the state so if you are having an event for FFAI please let me know and I will try my best to make it or at least promote it on your behalf at the state level. The AOH are also a great resource for this and I have been told by Martin as well as Kevin Ellis, the NYS AOH Webmaster that any FFAI Events that we would like to promote on their social media pages are very welcome. I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer!

In our Motto,

Dolores Desch
NYS LAOH Freedom For All Ireland Chair

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