

Easter Sunday 2017 Grange Event

Keynote Address by [Mr Niall Collins T.D.](#)

I am very honoured to be asked to lay the wreath here today on behalf of the public and local community. On your behalf and my own, I would like to commend the Grange Cross Residents Association on organising this very important event.

When I say important – some may ask why – well, it is so important to remind and educate so many of our younger generations about the sacrifice and history and culture of our local community and county.

This 1916 garden memorial was developed last year as part of our centenary celebrations, and it is very remarkable in that it seeks to acknowledge not only the well-known names of 1916, but also the lesser known members of Cumann na mBan and, indeed, the children who lost their lives during the Easter 1916 Rising.

On Easter Sunday 1951, the late President of Ireland, Seán T. O’Kelly, when unveiling the Old IRA Memorial in Newcastle West, said “County Limerick can set an All-Ireland lead in discharging its duty to our patriot dead”...and it is fair to say “lead” referred to by President Seán T O’Kelly has been both upheld and continued here in Grange.

It would, of course, be remiss of me not to mention and remember the fine men who lost their lives locally at Caherguillamore House in December 1920: Martin Conway – Daniel Sheehan – Harry Wade – John Quinlan – Ned Moloney, and many more who were injured.

2016 was a very proud year for our people and country – the State hosted many events, the GAA played their part, a significant event on Banna Beach in County Kerry – and many other high profile events; but it was the community events that made the difference, such as here, Bruff, Bruree and Ballylanders, to mention a few in County Limerick.

Our children in their schools also learned for the first time the accurate account of Irish Independence – they learned about the people of 1916 and the Tri-Colour – our Defence Forces, also here today, visited each school – and it was done in a non-political manner.

On days like today we speak of Republicanism – and many different interpretations come to people’s minds. For those who fought and died in 1916 and beyond – they sought to unite people rather than divide. Today, more than ever, Ireland needs the true spirit of Irish Republicanism – because in many ways we are becoming a more unfair and divided society – this can only be halted by people becoming more involved in their communities and on a voluntary basis and as political activists.

So, like the heroes of 1916 who made a difference, we need the next century’s band of volunteers to step up and make the difference. In 100 years’ time we don’t want our children’s children dealing with issues like us, including:

- Church and State scandals
- Mother and Baby Homes
- Industrial Schools
- Sectarian violence
- Economic boom and bust cycles (hopefully all now in the past)

Our present day unequal and unfair societal issues:

- Access to healthcare
- Access to education
- Secure and gainful employment
- Decent quality of life

We must meet head on our challenges – today:

- A fair recovery for all across the economy
- Dealing with Brexit (some say the biggest challenge yet)
- Next year [2018] is the 20th anniversary of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement - many lives saved.

In conclusion, the theme of my message here today is like the heroes of 1916 who were voluntary – everybody can today become a volunteer and help make Ireland a united society.

ENDS