

Easter Sunday Morning 2017 at the 1916 Remembrance Garden, adjacent to Grange Parish Church

Address by Martin O'Connor, Vice-Chairman of Grange Cross Residents Association (GCRA)

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Martin O'Connor, Vice-Chairman of Grange Cross Residents Association. It is my great honour and privilege to welcome you all here this morning to a short ceremony to remember all of those Irish men and women who fought and gave the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in the Easter Rising of 1916 for Irish Independence.

I wish to extend a warm welcome to our guest, Deputy Niall Collins, who has kindly agreed to address us this morning. I also wish to welcome members of Limerick City and County Council, all of my fellow parishioners and indeed everybody who is in attendance this morning. Thank you for coming along.

It only seems like yesterday when, on the 24th of April 2016 in what was a proud occasion for Grange, we witnessed Minister Michael Noonan perform the official opening of the wonderful Grange Garden of Remembrance, on the centenary of the 1916 Rising. You may recall a number of inspiring speeches on the day – these were recorded for the benefit of people into the future.

My colleague, Kieran Hourigan, Chairman of the GCRA, in his address on that occasion last year, pointed out that it was appropriate not only to remember the patriots of 1916 but also all of those over the centuries and decades who agitated and fought for Irish Independence.

I would also wish for us to remember here this morning the 'Caherguillamore Five' who are interred in the Republican Plot just inside the church gates, who all died in the vicinity of Caherguillamore House in December 1920. Others who fought for Irish Independence are also interred in this graveyard - too many to mention.

It is also an opportunity this morning to recall the Grange Ambush of November 1920 and the many brave Volunteers who participated and fought at Lower Grange. Of course, one could not remember local patriots without giving prominence to that great local man, Seoirse Clancy, who as Mayor of Limerick, was shot dead on 7th March, 1921.

We remember them all here this morning, and we are eternally grateful to them for their sacrifices that permit us all to stand here today, citizens of an independent and great country, the Republic of Ireland.

And so to our Remembrance Garden here in front of us. Isn't it looking resplendent here this morning coming up to a year since it was opened - the maturity of just one year shows! It is a dignified and a most fitting shrine to the men, women and children of 1916.

I must acknowledge here this morning the great work of Mickey O'Connell and his GCRA team who work tirelessly to attend to this memorial garden, keeping it looking so well. I know that it is a labour of love for them. Many thanks to you again Mickey and to all my GCRA

colleagues. A special mention of Mary O'Connell who did Trojan work organising the event; also our chairman, Kieran Hourigan, and Pa O'Connell for organising the Army attendance. At this point, I would like to thank Mick Treacy and his colleagues for participating in the event. Thank you all very much.

It gives me great pleasure now to invite Deputy Niall Collins to address us.

[Address by Deputy Niall Collins followed]

Thank you Deputy Collins for your touching and inspiring oration. We are extremely grateful to you for joining us here today, making it a memorable occasion.

[Followed by Martin's concluding remarks]

16th April, 2017