

PADDY O'FLAGHERTY REPORTS ON HOLY CROSS DISPUTE. GMU. 9
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PADDY O'FLAGHERTY

There was a standing ovation as the Chairman of the School's Board of Governors, Father Aidan Troy, received the award on behalf of the pupils, parents and staff. Father Troy said he was very grateful to the many people who'd supported the school.

FATHER AIDAN TROY

There's been a humbling experience to see 220 children, their teachers, their parents, the helpers in the school, the Board of Governors and the whole community of Ardoyne, with their elect leaders, with the community leaders combined in such an incredible way in order to stand for justice. I just hope that this award may be the first note of very good news for us. And on behalf of all of those, particularly the children, thanks to everyone, thank you.

PADDY O'FLAGHERTY

Martin McGuinness, was guest speaker at the awards, which are organised by the Andersonstown News newspaper. He said he believed that it was in everyone's interest that the Ardoyne Road protest should end.

MARTIN MCGUINNESS

And I also believe that the people of Glenbryn should be given the proper political leadership and should know very, very clearly that there are people like me from within the republican/nationalist tradition who want to meet with them.

PADDY O'FLAGHERTY

Later, Mr McGuinness gave his reaction to the Glenbryn Residents' decision to suspend their protest.

MARTIN MCGUINNESS

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We appreciate the fact that the children are going to go to school in the morning free of the difficulty that they've had for the past ten weeks, but the reality is that a lot of damage has been done in those ten weeks that the children were preparing for their examination. The protest has to end and it has to end immediately. Many of us within the nationalist/republican community know that there is a cry for help coming from Glenbryn, and politicians of all descriptions, not least the unionist politicians, have to respond to that. I'm totally and absolutely opposed to any community being demonised and I under no circumstances would even begin to attempt to demonise the people of Glenbryn. The people who live there are our unionist brothers and sisters. I am a republican, they are unionist, but republicans and unionists have come together in the Good Friday Agreement, it is surely not beyond our abilities. If there's a will to resolve these problems that exist in North Belfast, we have to use all our resources, political and social and community, to bring this to an end as a matter of urgency.

PADDY O'FLAGHERTY

And do you want to talk to the people in Glenbryn yourself?

MARTIN McGUINNESS

I would love to talk to the people in Glenbryn, my door is always open to them. I don't for one minute believe that we can sort this out in an hour, but I certainly think that every politician on the pro-Agreement side will be only too willing to do everything in their power to make an engagement with any community that is so much in the public focus at this time.

PADDY O'FLAGHERTY

And you're not simply saying to the people in Glenbryn your complaints are unjustified?

MARTIN McGUINNESS

No I'm not saying that at all, I'm saying that if there are problems surely there's enough intelligence and wisdom within all of us to sort those out. We are a society emerging from a very bitter conflict. I think we've made tremendous strides forward in the course of recent years, and I think we can move forward, we can cross the (unclear) together and we can bring about the type of change that our people want. And that does mean rising to the challenges which will be posed to the process by these on-going difficulties in the North Belfast community

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at this time. So we do want to engage with everyone and we want them to know that we want peace and equality and justice, not just for ourselves but for them also.

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