

Mountjoy Prison, Dublin.

Dec. 8th 1922.

5 a.m.

My dear Mother,

The time is short and much I would like to say must go unsaid but you will understand in such moments heart speaks to heart. At 3.30 a.m. this morning, we (Dick Barrett, Rory O'Connor, Joe McKelvey and I) were informed that we were to be executed as a reprisal. Welcome be the will of God, for Ireland is in His keeping despite foreign monarchs and treaties. Though unworthy of the greatest human honour that can be paid an Irishman or woman, I go to join Tone and Emmet, the Fenians, Tom Clarke, Connolly, Pearse, Kevin Barry and Childers. My last thoughts will be on God, and Ireland and on you.

You must not grieve Mother Darling. Once before you thought you had given me to Ireland. The reality has now come. You will bear this as you have borne all the afflictions the cause of Ireland brought you—nobly and bravely. It is a sore trial for you, but that great courageous soul of yours will rejoice for I die for the truth—life is only for a little while, and we shall be returned hereafter.

Through you I also send another message: it is this, let no thought of reprisal or revenge dominate Republicans because of our deaths. We die for the truth, vindication will come, the mist will be cleared away, and brothers in blood will before long be brothers in arms, against the oppression of our country and imperialist England . . . in this belief I die happy forgiving all, as I hope myself to be forgiven. The path the people of Ireland must tread is straight and hard and true, though narrow; only by following it can they be men. It is a hard road, but it's the road our Saviour followed—the road of Sacrifice. The Republic lives, our deaths make that a certainty.

I have had the Chaplain to see me. It is sad but I cannot agree to accept the Bishops' Pastoral, my conscience is quite clear, Thank God, with the old Gaels. I believe that those who die for Ireland have no need for prayer.

God Bless and Protect you,

Your Loving Son Willie.