

# Mannix, the Royal Navy and the Republic\*

by Dr Jeff Kildea

## **Introduction**

Some time ago Dr Richard Reid asked me whether I would give a paper on Archbishop Daniel Mannix in the context of the exhibits relating to him that would be on display in the Irish in Australia exhibition at the National Museum of Australia. At the time the exhibition was still a figment of Dr Reid's imagination. So, it was with some anticipation that I awaited the formal opening on 16 March 2011 to see what he might have in mind.

I assume that by now you have all had a look at the glass case in which the Mannix exhibits are displayed. They include:

- a copy of the 1916 proclamation of the Irish Republic;
- a video presentation of film footage from 19 May 1920 showing Archbishop Mannix departing Sydney for the United States on the first leg of his journey to Rome;
- a monstrance in the shape of the Cross of Cong presented to Mannix in 1962 as a gift from the people of Ireland to mark his 50 years as a bishop in Melbourne and in recognition of his support for Irish independence;
- Mannix's walking-out outfit in which he was often seen, including a cloak, a cane and a top hat; and
- a beautiful silver casket that held the Freedom of Dublin, which was presented to Mannix in 1925 the year in which he visited Ireland for the first, and last, time since his arrival in Australia in 1913.

So, in this paper I have set myself the following tasks: to identify the common thread linking those exhibits, to provide some context to them, and to examine some of the questions that arise from a consideration of them.

## **Voyage to America**

Archbishop Mannix did indeed depart Sydney on 19 May 1920 for the United States as depicted in the video. He was on his way to Rome for his first *ad limina* visit, the obligatory personal report which a bishop must periodically give to the pope on the state of his diocese. Mannix planned to spend some time travelling through the United States and Canada to New York from where he would cross the Atlantic and disembark at Queenstown (now Cobh) in County Cork so that he could visit his family in Charleville, and, in particular, his mother. From there he planned to travel through England and on to Rome. His return journey would take him back to England, thence to Marseilles and through the Suez Canal to China, Japan and the Philippines before making landfall in Brisbane and travelling by train to Melbourne via Sydney.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The story of Archbishop Mannix's 15-month journey to Rome and back and the particular episodes covered in this paper are told in varying degrees of detail by his biographers: EJ Brady, *Doctor Mannix: Archbishop of Melbourne*, Library of National Biography, Melbourne, 1934, pp. 149-175; Niall Brennan, *Dr Mannix*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1964, pp. 183-215; Frank Murphy, *Daniel Mannix: Archbishop of Melbourne 1917-1963*, Polding Press, Melbourne, 1972, pp. 77-104; Walter Ebsworth, *Archbishop Mannix*, HH Stephenson, Melbourne, 1977,

For an ordinary bishop in normal times such a journey might have been unremarkable despite its length and exotic itinerary. But Mannix was no ordinary bishop and the times were far from normal. In the words of one Mannix biographer Frank Murphy:

[T]he journey was destined to be so full of incident that the attention of the world was focussed upon him, and his name, fame and utterances were given a universal publicity that they had never known before.<sup>2</sup>

When Mannix commenced his journey in May 1920 he was at the height of his popularity in Australia, having just a few weeks before been escorted during the St Patrick's Day parade by an honour guard of 14 Victoria Cross recipients riding on white horses. His departure from Melbourne to Sydney to board the ship to America had to be put back two days because the crowd which turned out to farewell him delayed his progress to Spencer Street railway station, causing him to miss the train. In Sydney thousands also turned out to wish him *bon voyage* as he embarked on the SS *Ventura* bound for San Francisco.

Although beloved by many Irish-Australian Catholics, particularly those of the working class, he was despised by the majority Protestant community and as well by many Catholics who rejected his abrasive approach to the causes he advocated including opposition to conscription, state aid for Catholic schools and self-government for Ireland.

Having arrived in Australia in 1913 as coadjutor archbishop to Thomas Carr, the ageing Archbishop of Melbourne, Mannix rose to prominence in his new country during the conscription campaigns of 1916 and 1917, especially the latter. His description of the First World War as "an ordinary trade war" and his argument that Australia had done enough were met with accusations that he was disloyal to the British Empire and pro-German.

His profile was lifted to the national stage by the invective which Prime Minister Billy Hughes heaped on him. Hughes claimed that Mannix "preached sedition in season and out of season" and that "[b]ehind Dr Mannix are arrayed the IWW and the reckless extremists responsible for the recent strike, the pacifists and the pro-Germans".<sup>3</sup> Loyalist Australians called on the government to deport the archbishop.

After the war, accusations of disloyalty against Mannix did not abate. For shortly after the war of the nations ended the war of independence in Ireland began and Mannix became a leading advocate of Irish self-determination. By the time he set out on his journey to Rome, the situation in Ireland had severely deteriorated. In March 1920 the British government had introduced the Black and Tans. By the time Mannix was crossing the Atlantic on his way to Ireland the government had added the even more fearsome Auxiliaries to the forces arrayed against the IRA and the *Restoration of Order in Ireland Act 1920* was about to be passed into law, providing for the replacement of trial by jury by courts-martial invested with power to impose the death penalty. According to *The Times* the legislation meant "the complete collapse of the Irish legal system" but it, nevertheless, justified the measure on the ground of

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pp. 225-261; Michael Gilchrist, *Daniel Mannix: Priest & Patriot*, Dove Communications, Melbourne, 1982, pp. 83-101; BA Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix: The Quality of Leadership*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1984, pp. 103-123. See also Colm Kiernan, *Daniel Mannix and Ireland*, Alella Books, Morwell, 1984, pp. 139-144. In *Tearing the Fabric: Sectarianism in Australia 1910-1925*, Citadel Books, Sydney, 2002 I discuss at 217-218 the incident of Mannix's arrest by the Royal Navy which prevented his landing in Ireland, putting it in the context of the intense sectarian conflict raging in Australia in 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Murphy, *Daniel Mannix*, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Manifesto issued to Australian soldiers during the 1917 conscription referendum campaign, a copy of which is reproduced in *The Freeman's Journal*, 24 January 1918, p. 18.

“stern necessity”.<sup>4</sup> It was in this context that Archbishop Mannix began his sea voyage to America.

If Mannix hoped for smooth sailing and a two-and-a-half-week respite from the sectarian tensions of Australia he was to be disappointed. Some passengers, knowing very well who their fellow-traveller was, were determined to show their displeasure at the traitor in their midst, which they did by provoking incidents intended to embarrass the archbishop in American eyes.

During the crossing of the line celebrations a group of them came up behind the archbishop and sang “God Save the King” to see whether he would stand or not. Mannix ignored them.<sup>5</sup> Later, when the *Ventura* was preparing to depart Honolulu Harbour a band stationed on the wharf played a number of tunes to farewell the vessel, including “The Star-Spangled Banner”, the American national anthem. To the consternation of a fellow passenger, Marcellus Parsons of New York, the archbishop and his party did not stand during the playing of the anthem.

From the ship Parsons sent a telegram signed by eleven Americans to the Secretary of State complaining of the archbishop’s misconduct. He later lodged with the Immigration Bureau of the State Department a protest against the admission of Mannix to the United States and requested he be deported. Parsons also sent a telegram to *The New York World*.<sup>6</sup>

News of the allegation soon appeared in American and international newspapers.<sup>7</sup> Parsons told *The New York World* that he had approached Dr Mannix and had asked him whether he realised the band was playing the American anthem. According to Parsons, Mannix answered in the affirmative. Parsons then said, “Why don’t you rise?”, to which Mannix is said to have replied that he did not care to.<sup>8</sup> Garbled press reports of Mannix’s response to the controversy were not helpful. One newspaper reported, “Archbishop Mannix said he believed the ‘Star-Spangled Banner’ was an English anthem, because he thought he heard Englishmen singing it; and he therefore declined to stand”.<sup>9</sup>

In San Francisco the California branch of the Sons of Irish Freedom attempted to quell the controversy by issuing a statement, with the archbishop’s approval, denying the allegation and claiming that Dr Mannix and his party did stand during the American anthem, though, not knowing the words, they did not join in the singing. The statement went on to admit that Mannix had refused to stand when the band played “God Save the King” and had also remained seated when the band played “America”, which carries the same tune as “God Save the King”.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 2004, pp. 65-66.

<sup>5</sup> Murphy, *Daniel Mannix*, p. 77-78.

<sup>6</sup> *The Argus* 16 June 1920, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, *The New York Times* 21 June 1920, p. 5; 11 July 1920, p.12; 13 July 1920, p. 10; 18 July 1920, p. 7; *Chicago Daily Tribune* 16 June 1920, p. 1; *Los Angeles Times* 16 June 1920, p. 8; *The Washington Post* 16 June 1920, p. 11; *The Times* (London) 18 June 1920, p. 15; *The Irish Times* 17 June 1920, p. 5; *The Argus* 16 June 1920, p. 9.; *The Brisbane Courier* 18 June 1920, p. 7;

<sup>8</sup> *The Argus* 16 June 1920, p. 9; *Evening Post* (New Zealand) 18 June 1920, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Report in *The New York World* as published in the *Evening Post* (New Zealand) 16 June 1920, p. 7. In *Daniel Mannix and Ireland* (Alella Books, Melbourne, 1984), p. 140, Colm Kiernan cites *The Advocate*’s report of 17 June 1920 to the effect that Mannix was a poor sailor and had been seasick. He was resting on deck and did not stand to attention.

<sup>10</sup> NYT 21 June 1920, p.5.

Despite Parsons' attempt to embarrass Mannix in the eyes of Americans, the archbishop was warmly welcomed by the American Irish in San Francisco and on his six weeks journey across America to New York during which he addressed successful meetings of sympathisers in a number of towns and cities.<sup>11</sup> But the controversy did not go away. Parsons' allegation was repeated in the press shortly before Mannix arrived in New York: *The New York Times* describing Mannix as "the prelate who is said to have refused to stand when the 'Star Spangled Banner' was sung on shipboard".<sup>12</sup>

In a further attempt to defuse the issue, Mannix's secretary Father Arthur Vaughan went to New York in advance of the archbishop and gave reporters a more detailed account of the incident, though one not totally consistent with the earlier denial. According to Vaughan, Mannix did remain seated during the playing of the "Star Spangled Banner", but he did so because he did not know that the music, which he heard but faintly, was that of the American national anthem. Vaughan explained to the reporters, "It is all a plot. Efforts were made to discredit his Grace in Australia, and also on the *Ventura*. The incident in Honolulu Harbour was the culmination of a number of happenings".

According to Vaughan, Mannix was "confused and embarrassed" by the actions of some British passengers and it was ridiculous to think that he would insult a country he was about to visit. Vaughan told the reporters that earlier in the voyage Mannix had risen to his feet when "The Star-Spangled Banner" was played one night at dinner and that the archbishop had saluted the American flag at San Francisco.<sup>13</sup> (Lindsay Tanner might be interested to know that the bread and circus style of political discourse is not a recent phenomenon.)

The anthem incident was indeed a storm in a teacup. But the British Foreign Office regarded it seriously enough to monitor the situation,<sup>14</sup> and the US State Department instituted an inquiry and immigration officials felt compelled to issue a statement declaring there was no law under which Mannix could be excluded from the United States even if the inquiry disclosed he had failed to stand during the playing of the anthem.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, it demonstrated how easily Archbishop Mannix could stir up controversy and arouse passions on both sides, a phenomenon of which the British government was well aware. Hence the Foreign Office, already sensitive to the impact of the situation in Ireland on Anglo-American relations, kept a close watch on Mannix's activities in America.<sup>16</sup>

But were British concerns justified. After all, Archbishop Mannix was a senior churchman who had entertained royalty at Maynooth College, not once, but twice: firstly, in July 1903 when King Edward VII visited and Mannix was vice-president of the college; and secondly, in July 1911, when King George V visited and Mannix was president. James Griffin has written that he was seen as a "castle Catholic" who had allegedly engineered the dismissal of Professor Michael O'Hickey, a leading proponent of the Irish language, and that Padraig Pearse, one of the authors of the 1916 proclamation, once asked "Is Mannix an enemy to Irish

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<sup>11</sup> Ebsworth, *Archbishop Mannix*, pp. 226-228; Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, p. 108.

<sup>12</sup> NYT 11 July 1920, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> NYT 13 July 1920, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas E. Hachey, "The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix: A British Preventive Policy During the Anglo-Irish Troubles", *Irish University Review*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 1970, pp. 111-130 at 113-114.

<sup>15</sup> NYT 21 June 1920, p. 5; *The Times* (London) 18 June 1920, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Hachey, "The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix", p. 116, citing Foreign Office minute FO 371, vol. 4551 of 17 July 1920.

nationalism?”<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Archbishop Mannix had initially described the Easter Rising, during which the proclamation was published, as deplorable and its leaders as misguided.<sup>18</sup> But that was then and in 1920 the British government’s concerns were of more recent origins.

The British authorities were far from convinced that the purpose of Archbishop Mannix’s intended visit to Ireland was to visit his mum. To them Mannix was a troublemaker who would use his fiery rhetoric to whip up anti-government feeling. In one speech in America Mannix said, “I will consider it my duty to kneel at the graves of [the leaders executed in 1916] and thank them for what they have done for my country”.<sup>19</sup> General Sir Nevil Macready, the commander in chief of British forces in Ireland, described him as a “turbulent priest”, and later wrote that “his appearance in Ireland would have resulted in increased bloodshed”.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, although the British Cabinet considered speeches Mannix made in Australia to be “violently anti-British”, on 24 June it rejected a recommendation that he be prevented from landing in Ireland, fearing its effect on public opinion.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Mannix in America***

The Cabinet’s view hardened, however, when it received reports of speeches Mannix was giving in America, speeches which David Lloyd George later described as “extremely mischievous”<sup>22</sup>. For like Charles Stewart Parnell forty years before, Mannix said things to his American audiences that he did not say at home. Colm Kiernan has argued, “What fanned Mannix’s radicalism was his meeting with de Valera in Omaha, where they both spoke from the same platform”.<sup>23</sup> It may also have reflected the fact that in Australia the sedition laws circumscribed what Mannix could say about the Irish cause without risking prosecution.

Today, it seems unbelievable that a person could be prosecuted for advocating an Irish republic. But in the early post-war years the Hughes’ government continued to use wartime powers to silence its more radical opponents. For example, late in 1919 the Commonwealth Crown law authorities charged Robert Fraser and Fred Jenkinson with sedition for advocating an Irish republic in a newspaper printed by them called *The Republic*. The charge was laid following representations made to the government by a deputation from loyalist

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<sup>17</sup> James Griffin, “Archbishop Daniel Mannix”, *The Old Limerick Journal*, Autumn, 1990, pp. 27-34 at 28; James Griffin, “Mannix, Daniel (1864 - 1963)”, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 10, Melbourne University Press, 1986, pp 398-404.

<sup>18</sup> *The Advocate* 6 May 1916, p.25.

<sup>19</sup> Hachey, “The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix”, p. 122; Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, p. 150.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Bennett, *The Black and Tans*, Spellmount, Staplehurst (Kent), 2001, p. 80; Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, p. 149.

<sup>21</sup> Extract from Draft Conclusions, Cabinet meeting 24 June 1920, The National Archives (TNA), CO 537/1144. The Governor of New South Wales Sir Walter Davidson, who wrote to the Colonial Office reporting on Mannix’s departure from Australia, described Mannix as “a courageous leader of rebellion, for Ireland if not for Australia” (Letter 20 May 1920 from Sir Walter Davidson to Sir Henry Lambert, TNA CO 537/1144). Kiernan argues that the existence of the image of Mannix “as a radical revolutionary, who would incite Irishmen to riot”, was largely the work of Prime Minister Billy Hughes: “Hughes insisted that Mannix was a dangerous man, a rabble rouser and revolutionary” (Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, pp. 150-151).

<sup>22</sup> *The Times* (London) 23 July 1920, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, pp. 148-149.

organisations.<sup>24</sup> In Sydney Father Patrick Tuomey had been convicted and fined £30 in late 1918 for his public criticism of British rule in Ireland.<sup>25</sup> Mannix's status as a senior cleric might have given him some protection. However, as Bishop James Liston of Auckland was to find out in 1922, a bishop accused of seditious utterances in support of the Irish cause is not immune from prosecution.<sup>26</sup>

In Australia, Mannix and other leading supporters of the Irish cause did not openly advocate a republic for Ireland. Following the Easter Rising and the promulgation of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, a copy of which is on display in the exhibition, the Australian Irish generally continued to support home rule. But after the collapse of the home rule movement in Ireland in 1918 and the victory of Sinn Féin at the general elections in December that year, the diaspora increasingly advocated "self-determination" for Ireland.<sup>27</sup> At the Irish Race Convention in Melbourne attended by 2000 delegates representing a wide range of Irish opinion in Australia (including no less than 15 bishops and archbishops), a resolution was passed affirming "the right of the people of Ireland to choose their own form of government".<sup>28</sup>

Addressing the convention Mannix said that they were there "to support Ireland's claim as expressed at the last general election in Ireland and to support her chosen leader, Eamon De Valera ... especially now, when self-determination – which was really Sinn Feinism – was on everybody's lips". One might read into these words that Mannix was advocating that Ireland become an independent republic, but he was careful not to say so. Perhaps this was to avoid prosecution. But it needs also to be borne in mind that many of the delegates did not support such a proposal or could not be seen to do so. The position of the convention's chairman, TJ Ryan, the former premier of Queensland, was a case in point. He was being groomed to take over leadership of the federal Labor Party and could not afford to be seen to support such a radical proposal nor did he wish to do so.<sup>29</sup>

The constraints in Australia on what might be said in support of the Irish cause did not apply in America. After all, not only was the United States a republic, it was a republic established following a war of independence fought against the British crown. The muzzle was off.

A few days before arriving in New York Mannix spoke at the Catholic Summer School at Cliff Haven, where he delivered a fiery speech in which, according to the report in *The Times*, he "denounced England as the perpetual enemy of the United States, and demanded American

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<sup>24</sup> *The Argus* 25 November 1919, p. 7; 6 December 1919, p. 23. Although both men were committed for trial (*The Argus* 12 December 1919, p. 9), a jury acquitted Fraser at his trial in March 1920 (*The Argus* 30 March 1920, p. 8; 31 March 1920, p. 5).

<sup>25</sup> Kildea, *Tearing the Fabric*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>26</sup> See Rory Sweetman, *Bishop in the Dock: The Sedition Trial of James Liston*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1997. Bishop Liston was acquitted.

<sup>27</sup> A Self-determination for Ireland League was established in England in 1917 and thereafter leagues were set up in the dominions in the early 1920s (Richard Davis, "The Self-Determination for Ireland Leagues and the Irish Race Convention in Paris, 1921-22", *Papers and Proceedings of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association*, Vol 24 No 3, 1977).

<sup>28</sup> *The Argus* 4 November 1919, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> BA Santamaria contended that Ryan was opposed to a resolution calling for complete independence of Ireland as a republic "since his own view was limited to Home Rule, the link with Britain being retained" (Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, p. 105).

recognition of Sinn Féin”.<sup>30</sup> After telling his American audience that Ireland was ruled by an alien government he continued:

England never was a friend of the United States. When your fathers fought it was against England. Ireland has the same grievance against the same enemy, only ten times greater. I hope Ireland will make a fight equally successful. England was your enemy; England is your enemy today; England will be your enemy for all time.

The next day *The Times* condemned Mannix’s “bitter and provocative speech” and questioned whether it was conceivably justifiable for the Archbishop of Melbourne “to employ the Irish Question in an effort to embroil Great Britain with a friendly nation and former comrade in arms”.<sup>31</sup> Even Father Ebsworth, in his generally sympathetic biography of the archbishop, criticised Mannix’s Cliff Haven speech as “entering the pathless realms of international politics, a world of intrigue that by no stretch of the imagination can be classed as his concern”.<sup>32</sup>

On his arrival in New York on 17 July Mannix used the R-word, telling reporters, “I am altogether in favour of the Irish Republic. I cannot understand how anybody who sincerely held to the principles that all of us seemed to be proclaiming during the war can now fail to support the Irish Republic”.<sup>33</sup>

But it was not only Mannix’s intemperate language that concerned the British government. Mannix and De Valera made a number of appearances together in New York and the enthusiastic reaction which Mannix received from his Irish American hosts would have confirmed in their minds the danger his oratory posed were he to go to Ireland. At one such event Mannix was the guest of honour along with Eamon de Valera at a mass meeting in New York’s Madison Square Garden. Fifteen thousand sympathisers crowded into the auditorium with thousands more outside. The archbishop addressed them on “British usurpation of authority in Ireland for the last 750 years”. The next day the Mayor of New York John Hylan conferred on Mannix the freedom of the city.<sup>34</sup>

The issue was raised in the House of Commons and the Lord Privy Seal Andrew Bonar Law, replying to a question, informed the House that the matter of Mannix’s proposed visit to Ireland was under review.<sup>35</sup> Four days later, on 23 July, the Foreign Office instructed its consul-general in New York to inform Archbishop Mannix that the government had decided that he would not be permitted to land in Ireland.<sup>36</sup> The next day the consul-general sent a special delivery letter to Mannix advising of the government’s decision,<sup>37</sup> and on 26 July

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<sup>30</sup> *The Times* (London) 16 July 1920, p. 12. Cliff Haven in Plattsburgh, New York State on the shore of Lake Champlain was the site of the nationally known Catholic Summer School of America which was held between the 1890s and the 1940s and which covered the attitude of the Catholic Church on current matters as well as educational, cultural and political issues. It attracted many participants and visitors including two American presidents.

<sup>31</sup> *The Times* (London) 17 July 1920, p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Ebsworth, p. 229. Another sympathetic biographer, BA Santamaria, wrote that in 1955 Mannix admitted to him that he had spoken too strongly and had allowed himself to be provoked by attacks (Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, p. 109).

<sup>33</sup> NYT 18 July 1920, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> NYT 19 July 1920, p. 10; 20 July 1920, p. 8; *The Times* (London) 20 July 1920, p. 11.

<sup>35</sup> *The Times* (London) 20 July 1920, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> Hachey, “The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix”, p. 116.

<sup>37</sup> Hachey, “The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix”, p. 118.

Lloyd George informed the House that Mannix would not be permitted to land in Ireland.<sup>38</sup> Mannix was not fazed. Three days later he publicly announced that he would be sailing to Ireland on the SS *Baltic*, which was leaving the next day at noon.<sup>39</sup> He told a delegation from the American Irish Historical Society, “I am willing to go to prison, even to be put in chains, for the cause of Ireland’s freedom”.<sup>40</sup>

The propensity for Mannix to cause division between his supporters and detractors was further demonstrated as the *Baltic* was preparing to sail. The ship’s cooks and stewards threatened to go on strike if he came aboard and its firemen threatened to go on strike if he were not allowed to sail.<sup>41</sup> The impasse was resolved when the cooks and stewards took the advice of the chief steward to leave the matter to the British government. But that was not the end of the strife. As reported by the *New York Times*, “The departure of the *Baltic* was marked by disorders rarely if ever equalled at an American transatlantic passenger pier. There were hisses, cheers, fist-fights and the flash of revolvers”, as a crowd of about 5000 waving flags and placards gathered at the pier to farewell the archbishop.<sup>42</sup> A letter to *The New York Times* signed by Australian ex-servicemen living in New York concluded:

There is one tribute that Australia pays to the departing prelate wholeheartedly. For sowing discord in communities where peace reigned before he has no peer. If that is his apparent purpose it must be admitted he succeeds well.<sup>43</sup>

Officials in London sought to ensure that the government’s decision to bar him from Ireland could not be thwarted by stealth. The Cabinet was told that Atlantic liners had been instructed not to stop at Queenstown.<sup>44</sup> But diverting the *Baltic* to its final destination, Liverpool, was itself fraught. Newspapers reported there were concerns as to the reception the archbishop would receive in that most Irish of English cities and the backlash that might lead to violence. It was suggested that destroyers might be dispatched to escort the ship into Liverpool.<sup>45</sup>

The Dublin Corporation fully expecting Mannix to arrive in their city passed a resolution conferring the freedom of the city on the archbishop and appointed a deputation to meet him at the port when he landed.<sup>46</sup> Preparations were also underway in Cork as well as in Liverpool in case he landed there.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> NYT 27 July 1920, p. 14; 28 July 1920, p. 14. The wisdom of the government’s decision was not universally accepted. *The Times*, for one, questioned the wisdom of excluding Mannix, arguing that it could do more harm than good. See, for example, *The Times* (London) 3 August 1920, p. 10. Nevertheless, Lloyd George confirmed to the House on 5 August that Mannix would not be allowed to land in Ireland (*The Times* (London) 6 August 1920, p. 12).

<sup>39</sup> NYT 30 July 1920, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Hachey, “The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix”, p. 119.

<sup>41</sup> NYT 31 July 1920, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> NYT 1 August 1920, p. 1. The correspondent of *The Times* referred to “violent scenes such as have not been witnesses here for many years” (*The Times* (London) 2 August 1920, p. 8).

<sup>43</sup> NYT 3 August 1920, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> NYT 2 August 1920, p. 1; Hachey, “The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix”, p. 120.

<sup>45</sup> NYT 6 August 1920, p. 9; 7 August 1920, p. 1; 8 August 1920, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *The Times* (London) 10 August 1920, p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> *The Times* (London) 7 August 1920, p. 11; 9 August 1920, p. 11.



## ***Mannix's arrest on the high seas***

As the *Baltic* sailed along Irish coast on the evening of 8 August the lights of Queenstown glittered on the distant shore amid the glow of bonfires lit to welcome Mannix home. There then appeared a pair of Royal Navy destroyers and in mid-ocean the captain of the *Baltic* was called on to stop his ship. A launch came alongside and a party of two naval officers and two detectives from Scotland Yard boarded the ship and served two orders on Archbishop Mannix: one signed by General Nevil Macready, the British military commander in Ireland, prohibiting Mannix from landing in Ireland; and one signed by Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, prohibiting Mannix from visiting Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow, cities with significant Irish populations.<sup>48</sup>

Mannix was already aware of the first order and of the fact that the *Baltic* would not be calling at Queenstown. However, he was unaware of the second order. It meant that he could not remain on the *Baltic* as it was bound for Liverpool. When requested to transfer to HMS *Wivern*, Mannix at first refused, but after he was formally arrested he complied without further protest. As the archbishop left the ship, cheering and shouts of opposition broke out among the large number of passengers who had turned out to witness the event.<sup>49</sup>

The *Wivern* ferried the archbishop to the south-western tip of England, where he disembarked at 4pm the next day at the port of Penzance. Two hours later the *Baltic* docked at Liverpool where a large crowd, including a deputation from the Dublin Corporation, were disappointed to learn that Mannix would not be landing there.<sup>50</sup> The actual site of his landing, evocative of comic opera, gave the wits a field day to parody the incident. One wrote a Gilbertian-style verse that ended:

For history shows no braver men,  
In war or in romance,  
Than the captors of that gentle priest,  
The Pirates of Penzance.<sup>51</sup>

Mannix had his own fun to the discomfort of the British government, telling *The Times*, “Since the Battle of Jutland the British Navy has not scored any success comparable with ... the capture without the loss of a single British sailor of the Archbishop of Melbourne”.<sup>52</sup>

There was an immediate outcry following Mannix’s arrest and not only from predictable sources. *The Times* called it a blunder, its Dublin correspondent writing that “the proposed martyrdom of Dr Mannix will put new difficulties in the way of a political settlement”.<sup>53</sup> *The Manchester Guardian* claimed, “The Government has made us all look rather foolish”.<sup>54</sup> The esteemed writer GK Chesterton, no friend of Mannix, concurred, arguing, “The whole Mannix affair is a gigantic farce in which the British Government has played an extraordinary

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<sup>48</sup> Murphy, *Daniel Mannix*, pp. 90-91; Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, pp.111-112, which quotes from a letter dated 7 September 1920 which Mannix’s secretary Father Arthur Vaughan wrote to his sisters and brother in Melbourne.

<sup>49</sup> *The Times* (London) 10 August 1920, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> *The Times* (London) 10 August 1920, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Hachey, “The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix”, p. 124.

<sup>52</sup> *The Times* (London) 11 August 1920, p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> *The Times* (London) 9 August 1920, p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, p.114.

part ... playing Herod to Mannix's John the Baptist".<sup>55</sup> Demonstrations were held around the world, including in Australia, America, Canada and England.<sup>56</sup> Longshoremen in New York refused to work on British ships in protest over Mannix.<sup>57</sup> Ten members of the Australasian Catholic hierarchy who were in the UK on their way home from their own *ad limina* visits lodged a protest against the treatment of Archbishop Mannix, describing it as "an indignity to us, his brothers, as well as to the whole Catholic body, both priests and people, of Australia and New Zealand".<sup>58</sup> Twenty-seven Irish bishops also protested.<sup>59</sup>

### ***Mannix in England***

*The Times* reported that Mannix had begun to seek legal advice about contesting the ban, but ultimately he did not pursue such a course.<sup>60</sup> In an attempt, perhaps, to placate the archbishop the prime minister told the parliament that the government was prepared to give every assistance to Archbishop Mannix's mother to visit him in England.<sup>61</sup> But Mannix did not see it as an act of kindness, accusing Lloyd George of dragging the name of his 89-year old mother into the affair, a "reminder of his cynical want of consideration for old age [which] cannot improve his present position before the Press or the country".<sup>62</sup>

Mannix told a reporter for *The Times* that he intended to press his claim to go to Ireland by every means within his power.<sup>63</sup> But, as events turned out, his powers were insufficient to overcome the British government's embargo while the crisis in Ireland continued. This was despite representations made on the archbishop's behalf by members of the English hierarchy and other influential persons.<sup>64</sup> Once it became apparent that the ban would remain, Mannix used his time in England and his high public profile to promote the cause of Irish self-determination and to denounce British misrule in Ireland.<sup>65</sup> Yet, he tempered his language, particularly in the early months there, speaking favourably of dominion home rule as a form of government that might be acceptable as a realistic alternative to a republic in order to bring peace to Ireland.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> NYT 14 August 1920, p. 2; Hachey, "The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix", p. 124.

<sup>56</sup> *The Catholic Press* 19 August 1920, p. 19; NYT 16 August 1920, p. 3; Murphy, *Daniel Mannix*, p. 95; Hachey, "The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix", p. 127; Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, pp.115-116.

<sup>57</sup> NYT 28 August 1920, pp. 1, 3; 29 August 1920, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> *The Times* (London) 13 August 1920, p. 10. BA Santamaria claimed that Archbishop Michael Kelly of Sydney was among the Australian bishops visiting Ireland at the time Mannix was arrested but that he refused to sign the letter (Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, p. 119).

<sup>59</sup> Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, p. 147.

<sup>60</sup> *The Times* (London) 12 August 1920, p. 7. The government justified its decision on the *Defence of the Realm Regulation*, but senior civil servants privately expressed doubt as to its legality (Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, p.116).

<sup>61</sup> *The Times* (London) 17 August 1920, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> *The Times* (London) 18 August 1920, p. 12.

<sup>63</sup> *The Times* (London) 11 August 1920, p. 10.

<sup>64</sup> Hachey, "The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix", pp. 126-7; Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, p.118.

<sup>65</sup> For a detailed and analytical account of Mannix's activities in England during this period see Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, pp. 152-164.

<sup>66</sup> Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, pp. 152-154.

The British government provided a further opportunity for Mannix to gain publicity for the cause of Ireland. On 12 August, while the archbishop was first settling into his London residence following his forced removal from the *Baltic*, Crown forces in Ireland arrested the Lord Mayor of Cork Terence MacSwiney, a Sinn Féin activist.<sup>67</sup> In protest he went on hunger strike and, after being tried and convicted by court martial under the new *Restoration of Order in Ireland Act*, he was transferred to London's Brixton prison.<sup>68</sup> Mannix quickly became associated with his fellow Corkman, whose father lived in Melbourne, first visiting MacSwiney in Brixton on 23 August.

Rallies were now being called to protest against the British government's ill-treatment of both Mannix and MacSwiney. MacSwiney's hunger strike lasted 74 days before he eventually died on 25 October 1920. All the while his slow agonising death was reported in the press around the world. Mannix again visited him in Brixton prison and gave him the last rites of the Church. Mannix also officiated at his funeral service at St George's Cathedral, Southwark, and led the procession to Euston Station, from where his remains were taken to Ireland for burial.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, the British government never relented on its ban on Mannix, and the archbishop eventually left England in March 1921 for his much-belated visit to the pope. He returned to England in May on his way home but sailed for Australia without setting foot in Ireland.<sup>70</sup>

In the early days of his sojourn in England it was suggested that the freedom of the city of Dublin might be conferred on him in London. However, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, after visiting Mannix in England, issued a statement denying the story and saying that Mannix was "utterly opposed to having the freedom of the City of Dublin conferred upon him anywhere else but in Dublin, no matter when that may be".<sup>71</sup>

### ***Ireland at last***

Mannix did get to visit Ireland – but not until June 1925 when leading a pilgrimage to Rome during the Holy Year. By then the War of Independence had ended and in 1922 the 26 counties of the south had achieved self-government, not as a republic but as a dominion within the British Empire known as the Irish Free State.<sup>72</sup>

Mannix, almost alone among the hierarchy in Australia and Ireland, had maintained the cause of the republic, speaking out publicly against the Anglo-Irish Treaty and in support of the republicans during the Civil War. On their arrival in Dublin Mannix and his 90 or so fellow-pilgrims were greeted by a cheering crowd estimated at 20 000 and a delegation of prominent republicans including Eamon De Valera. But Mannix was ignored by the Free State

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<sup>67</sup> *The Times* (London) 13 August 1920, p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, p. 155.

<sup>69</sup> *The Times* (London) 27 October 1920, p. 12; 29 October 1920, p. 9; Ebsworth, *Archbishop Mannix*, pp. 244-245. Kiernan argues that it was the death of MacSwiney that "was to fire Mannix's radicalism, to outrage his moral sense, to transform him into an Irish Republican" (Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, p. 154).

<sup>70</sup> Hachey, "The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix", p. 130.

<sup>71</sup> *The Times* (London) 14 August 1920, p. 11.

<sup>72</sup> The story of Archbishop Mannix's visit to Ireland in 1925 is told in varying degrees of detail by his biographers: Brady, *Doctor Mannix*, pp. 194-202; Brennan, *Dr Mannix*, pp. 228-229; Murphy, *Daniel Mannix*, pp. 122-131; Ebsworth, *Archbishop Mannix*, pp. 277-289; Gilchrist, *Daniel Mannix*, pp. 120-125; Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, pp.134-140. See also Kiernan, *Daniel Mannix and Ireland*, pp. 184-204.

government and most of the Catholic hierarchy.<sup>73</sup> He was even denied permission to address the students of Maynooth College, where he had served as president before his appointment to Melbourne.<sup>74</sup>

Kiernan claimed that De Valera had visited Mannix in Rome prior to his coming to Ireland “to plead with Mannix not to lead the pilgrims to Ireland, but to come to Ireland if at all as a private individual” as requested by the Irish hierarchy. This, he argued, was because De Valera “would not welcome an open breach between Mannix and the Catholic hierarchy” and “did not wish to give the hierarchy ... any reason to ignore Mannix”. The hierarchy had condemned the republican cause in a joint pastoral letter issued in October 1922 and Mannix’s visit in an official capacity placed the bishops in a difficult position as he was widely regarded as an avowed republican. By ignoring De Valera’s advice Mannix, in Kiernan’s opinion, “ensured the failure of his mission for peace and reconciliation”.<sup>75</sup>

By then also, there was not the same imperative to visit Ireland as existed in 1920: Mannix’s mother had died in January, even before the archbishop had left Australia;<sup>76</sup> and the Dublin Corporation no longer existed. The Free State government had dissolved it and appointed commissioners, who were not minded to confer on Mannix the freedom of the city. Although the members of the dissolved corporation met and resolved to do so, the formalities required Mannix to sign the roll of burgesses, which was under the control of the commissioners. It looked unlikely that the honour, which was to have been conferred on him in 1920, would be bestowed.<sup>77</sup>

On his travels around Ireland Mannix made speeches critical of the Treaty and the Free State government and accepted the freedom of cities from pro-republican councils such as Limerick and Sligo. In many places he was warmly received but in others he was snubbed. Even in his home town of Charleville he was locked out of the church, an experience, according to Kiernan, “that cut deep and left a permanent scar”.<sup>78</sup> But some have questioned whether republican leaders, including De Valera, welcomed Mannix’s aggressive republicanism at that particular time. It was not 1920 and their opponents were no longer the hated Saxons but their Irish compatriots. Mannix had been away from Ireland for 12 years and was out of touch with the realities and needs of a nation riven by civil war.

Referring to Mannix’s 1925 visit to Ireland, journalist and writer Joe Broderick has written:

Although he professed to speak for peace and for unity amongst Irish people of all opinions, in fact he was undisguisedly taking sides and reopening wounds still fresh from the recent civil war. ... deriding the 'stepping stones' theory of those who defended the Treaty ... . The archbishop's approach was too blunt; Irish politics would be requiring men capable of more sinuous and subtle manoeuvrings.

And, of course, the most proficient exponent of those virtues was De Valera, who in time would ease himself back to the centre of Irish politics and dominate it for the rest of his long

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<sup>73</sup> *The Times* (London) 30 June 1925, p. 18. BA Santamaria wrote that there were a number of Irish bishops who sent letters inviting Mannix to accept their hospitality, naming four (Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, p.135).

<sup>74</sup> *The Times* (London) 8 September 1925, p. 13.

<sup>75</sup> Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, p. 187.

<sup>76</sup> Her funeral was attended by De Valera and was said to be one of the largest seen in the district for many years (Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, pp. 187-188).

<sup>77</sup> *The Times* (London) 8 June 1925, p. 14.

<sup>78</sup> Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, pp. 191-194.

political career. Broderick suggests that, “In his heart, [De Valera] may have felt a certain relief at his friend's forthcoming departure”.<sup>79</sup> BA Santamaria is less critical of Mannix’s interventions in Ireland, arguing that Mannix counselled De Valera to take the oath of allegiance and enter the Dáil, a step he in fact took two years later.<sup>80</sup>

### ***Tributes from a grateful nation***

As the day of Mannix’s departure drew near it looked as though Mannix would once more miss out on the freedom of the city of Dublin. But on 22 October 1925 the archbishop finally received the honour, not officially from the city commissioners but in a ceremony attended by republican supporters, including De Valera, but few others, certainly not the leaders of church and state. During the ceremony a certificate of the freedom of the city which had been voted for in 1920 was presented to the archbishop in a silver casket engraved with an image of an ocean liner, the *Baltic*, and a Royal Navy warship, HMS *Wivern*.<sup>81</sup>

It was small consolation for the wounded sensitivities Archbishop Mannix felt at being snubbed by the government and the clergy. Less than a fortnight later Mannix left Ireland for Australia, never to return.<sup>82</sup> “[H]e would not run the risk of being insulted by his own country twice”.<sup>83</sup>

Yet Mannix continued to be popular with Irish republicans and, indeed, broad sections of the Irish people. So much so that his memory lingered in Ireland for decades following his last visit home. In 1962, to mark the golden jubilee of his consecration as a bishop, Mannix was presented with a monstrance fashioned from a replica of the Cross of Cong, a gift from the people of Ireland.<sup>84</sup>

And today, through the efforts of those who have worked so diligently to put together the Irish in Australia exhibition, we are able to stand in front of the Mannix exhibit to view these objects and ponder the momentous events which they call to mind.

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<sup>79</sup> Joe Broderick, “De Valera and Archbishop Daniel Mannix”, *History Ireland*, Vol 2 No. 3, 1994. Cf. Frank Murphy who passes benign judgment on Mannix’s “appeal for unity” (Murphy, *Daniel Mannix*, pp. 129-130).

<sup>80</sup> Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix*, pp.137-140.

<sup>81</sup> *The Times* (London) 24 October 1925, p. 17. The casket has an inscription in Irish which translates as: “This casket is bestowed by the Dublin Corporation on Most Reverend Dr Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, on the occasion of his visit to Ireland 1925”. (With thanks to Professor Anders Ahlqvist).

<sup>82</sup> *The Times* (London) 2 November 1925, p. 11.

<sup>83</sup> Kiernan, *Mannix and Ireland*, pp. 194-195.

<sup>84</sup> Murphy, *Daniel Mannix*, pp. 263-264.