

19 March, 1982

Dear Daddy, Mammy and all at home,

Finally I have arrived in Caracas after the time I've spent in Europe. When I left home I first went to England. I visited some Latin American Friends in London and then that Sunday in the Evening travelled up to see Kathy Noonan. I was really very fortunate as in the bus station where I arrived I met Kathy so we took a bus which left us in a town about three miles away from her house. We took a taxi to the house.

The house has other ones nearby but is about a mile and a half from the nearest shop and she usually uses a bicycle to go to shop. It is a very nice house and the area is completely flat with very good land. She has about two acres of land behind the house and an acre is planted with fruit bushes - raspberries, special blackberries and the bushes are in very good condition. In that sense next summer she should be able to get a good income from fruit. I helped isolate the house a bit as a lot of wind was getting in through one of the doors and the house was difficult to heat for that reason. She has a lot of timber so I spent a good bit of the following day cutting some of it for the fire. Really it is a very nice place and I am quite sure she will make a good hand of it.

I spent some two days in London visiting with the Latin American Exiles and then left for Belgium by train and ship. I missed the night train and was going to take a special boat which floats over the water on air but as the sea was choppy I could not travel on it, so we all had to wait some two hours and then travelled by ship. In Brussels I met with one of our brothers. The central house of the fraternities is now in Brussels and they were fixing the house. It is quite a big house with four flights of stairs although on each floor there are about two rooms. I met also with a group of Latin Americans and then left to see the priest who is sick with cancer. In effect I found him a little improved since he had left Venezuela. But unfortunately in more recent weeks he has got worse and was hospitalised for some two weeks for chemical therapy. Apparently he has improved again but I'm afraid that it is now only a question of time before he dies. He is constantly losing weight which is really a bad sign. However he still has hope that the cancer be stopped and there is always that chance.

When I got to Paris I immediately met Ada, Nelly, Guillermo, Felisa etc and all who visited Ireland. They are all well. Maria has got much bigger. Nelly and Guillermo get on much better together. Vladimir is also much better with his wife and the young lad is getting bigger all the time. In Paris I was on the point of boarding the plane to Caracas when I spoke with the person who is president of the federation with which I am working. I was asked to stay on in Europe for some more weeks to do work on human rights. That meant travelling to Spain, then back to France, Switzerland, Holland and then back to France. That took up more than 6 weeks of time and really I hardly had any time. Most of the time was spent in Switzerland, in Geneva because there was a meeting of the United Nations Commission of Human Rights. Together with a lot of other people we were working trying to get the United Nations to do something about the problem of disappearances, torture, imprisonment etc. It is not easy to get them to do anything because all the delegations are tied up in politics and diplomacy. The Russians against the Yanks, The Arabs against the Israelis. Despite the fact that they are supposedly a commission for Human Rights they really ever get anything effectively done or come to an agreement among themselves. In that way all the countries do as they wish so that if they want to get rid of half of their own population there is very little that is ever done about. If the United Nations functioned as it should, the world would certainly be a better and more peaceful place. As it is there is not much more one can do than bring public pressure to bear on them.

Finally after everything I got back to France and then left for Venezuela on the third of March. I arrived here fine, finding that you had already sent on the newspapers and I got the letter from Nuala with the photos. They came out very well. I imagine Nuala and Margaret are really excited about Siobhan - I'm sure she is fine. I'm enclosing a card for them. I hope I don't forget it.

Things are really in a big mess here in Venezuela. The money was devalued by over 100 % in recent weeks so there is pre havoc everywhere. That means that the dollar or any other foreign money is now valued doubled. I'm quite sure that things will become much more difficult now for a lot of people and certainly the time of the bonanza from the oil is finished. Something similar is happening in England I believe. There is really a crash in oil prices in the world. In that way Ireland is lucky as it will now be getting cheaper oil. Maybe the prize on the gallon of petrol will go down.

I sent a telegram asking you to forward by telex - a bank transfer to Manya Alarcón Alla who is in Costa Rica. That Manya I will get back from other people in Holland. What has happened is that with the devaluation here it is now very difficult to get foreign money so I hope to recover the 1500 \$ vs fairly quickly.

at the moment with FEDEFAD - the Human Rights organization I'm working with, we are trying to get an office in the City etc. It is not easy to get a place and rent is expensive but hopefully this week something turns up.

We are getting ready for Holy Week at the moment as there is a lot of movement around in the area. The other day I met another Irish fellow who has been here for some 7 years.

Venezuela has now gone broke altogether with the slump in oil prices and people are very disorientated.

I'm sure everybody is fine at home and Margaret & Jo Nell's baby is fine. Give my best wishes to all and will write again soon. Sorry for the delay on this letter

Love Bless you and son
 Bob