

Translation

Unidad 9

La Plata

12th November

Dear Justin,

I would be very grateful if you could send this to my parents and all my family in Ireland. It was wonderful to hear all about them and also that they were so worried about what had happened to me. Hopefully, with the help of God, the whole problem will be settled up soon.

All in all, I am very well and getting used to prison life. Without the help given to me by the Embassy and the media in Ireland, I feel my situation would be a thousand times worse and I even doubt that I would be writing this letter. However all that is over now, and I have a lot of hope that things will be settled up soon. Up till now they have not brought any charges against me and I am held (as they say here) at the disposition of the Government. That is to say the Argentine Government has decided to hold me prisoner, and they can let me go or expell me whenever they like. That is one is kept a prisoner until the Government decides otherwise. This is the case with a lot of the people who are being held prisoner at the moment.

The prison where I am is in La Plata, which is about an hour's journey from Buenos Aires. It is quite new, and there are forty cells in each block with 2 in each cell. That is, we are a group of 80 together. We are not very long here, so we are still getting used to the rhythm and the discipline of the place. We get up at 6 in the morning, have breakfast at 7.30 (Mostly bread and milk) and at 8.30 we leave the cells for two hours recreation in the fresh air, where the 80 of us are together. We go back to the cells at more or less 10.30, and they give us our lunch at around mid-day (soup, some meat with salad, and bread). Then they give us two more hours of recreation in the afternoon, and we have dinner at 7.30. After dinner we can go to bed.

In general the food is good, and they have a canteen where we can buy things. Visits are only allowed to direct relatives (that is, father, mother, brother or sister, wife etc) once a week for two hours. You have to have special permission for anyone else to visit you. We are in the cells for 20 hours a day, and we spend the time reading, writing or chatting between the two of us, as there is no work allowed.

On Monday mornings, the five priests who are held here get together and we celebrate Mass. The priests are prisoners like myself, but they are in different blocks. In all there are 14 blocks, but in much of these there is only one person to a cell.

So far we have not been getting the papers regularly, but later on we will probably get them every day. They also allow some books in, although when I tried to get the Bible they would not let it in. I don't know why. The news from outside is very sad; there is a lot of violence every day. I hope the situation gets better soon. Unfortunately the letters you write to me are not allowed in, as they are