

## Hibernians For LIFE .... Protect the Unborn

A Cairde,

On behalf of the newly elected Executive Board, I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and that you will have a happy, peaceful, and holy Christmas.

The new Division Officers are: President, Brendan O'Dowd. Vice-President, John O'Grady. Recording Secretary, Joseph McMahon. Financial Secretary, Ed Dennehy.

Treasurer, John Brophy Jr. Standing Committee, Bill O'Donnell. Marshal, Keith Reynolds. Sentinel, Marty Hogan.

I would like to thank the two members of the 2008 Board who are stepping down.

Paul Byrne and Don Higgins have done a terrific job in their positions over the last year. Unfortunately family commitments and time constraints dictate that they cannot devote the time they would like, or deem necessary, to continue on the Board.

On a personal level, I am very honored and humbled to be asked to lead the Division for one more year. I will continue to do all I can to promote the Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity of our noble order going forward. I want to thank the membership for the tremendous support and encouragement I have received in the past and I ask that you continue to help me in 2009.

Although we may differ on some issues, we all have a common thread that unites us.

We come from Hibernia. Some of our members emigrated from Ireland to this great country; some are descendants of people who chose to break away from oppression, and what they saw as hopelessness, brought about by a tyrannical persecutor. They were forced to take that perilous journey, to make a better life for themselves, and so that their children could be raised in liberty. We can only imagine the gauntlet of emotion that ran through the minds of these brave souls as they set sail from Ireland. There had to be apprehension, sorrow and fear, tempered with excitement and joy for the potential great adventure that lay ahead. They had to leave their family behind, their parents, brothers and sisters, some never to see them again. They came with very little in material world items, but were laden down with talent, ambition, creativity, a work ethic second to none, but most importantly they brought their deep unwavering faith in God and the Catholic Church. Both in Ireland and here some risked their lives to practice that faith and some even fought to preserve it.

We owe them so much .... America owes them so much.

I think of how proud they would feel to know that their descendants continued the traditions.

How gratified they would feel to have you, my fellow Hibernians, nurture your children in the fundamental beliefs they held so dear. What a joy it is to see young people keep the tradition alive: like Maureen Gertzki and Elizabeth and Bridget Curtin joining in the Irish music seisiún on Sundays at the Hall, or to see the young step dancers there on Thursdays. We see our children getting together at different Division functions playing together and making life long memories of happy times at the Hall.

But most importantly, to see our members and their children keeping their faith alive, by going up to receive Holy Communion on a Sunday at Mass. .... the closest we experience Heaven on this Earth.

I thank you for being a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and of Division #1.

You can be proud of the Order, of this Division, and of yourselves.

Go mbeannaí Dia thú

Brendan O'Dowd *Uachtarán*