

Brokenness, Forgiveness, Healing, and Peace in Ireland,

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IN THE QUEST FOR PEACE in Ireland there is a strange dialectic of innocence and betrayal, sin and forgiveness, memory and the reconciling of memories. In Christian terms we confront once more the shocking interconnections between sin and grace as the ground where the human heart encounters divine mystery and where human ways—more often than not—part company from the ways of God.

Recently, a stark and significant book was published in Belfast under the title *Lost Lives*.¹ It recorded the names of the men, women, and children who died as a result of the Northern Ireland Troubles and gave a short synopsis of their lives and the circumstances of their deaths. In its 1,630 pages we are presented with the most comprehensive overview ever of the death of every person who died in the Troubles, constructed from media reportage and interviews. Between the covers of one book was the stark record of names, page upon page of them, 1,630 pages of human suffering distilled from 3,637 lost lives and from the pain of 3,637 families bereaved of loved ones. On taking up the book, I turned to the entry for July 28, 1972, and read the short account of the death of Philip Maguire, my

1. David McKittrick, Seamus Kelters, Brian Feeney and Chris Thornton, eds., *Lost Lives: The Stories of the Men, Women, and Children Who Died as a Result of the Northern Ireland Troubles* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1999).