

# The Soul of the Tricolour

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In recent months, we have witnessed a troubling phenomenon: the Irish Tricolour – our symbol of unity and hope – being waved as a banner of exclusion and hostility toward migrants. This distortion of our national emblem is not only hypocritical; it is a betrayal of the very ideals that gave birth to the Irish Republic.

The green, white and orange were chosen to represent reconciliation: green for the Gaelic tradition, orange for the Protestant tradition and white for the peace that binds them. It was never meant to be a flag of division, still less a weapon against the vulnerable. To use it as a rallying point for anti-migrant sentiment is to strip the Tricolour of its soul.

Ireland today stands among the wealthiest nations in the world. Our economy is strong, our global reputation enviable. Yet our prosperity stems not only from ingenuity and hard work but also from an unjust global system that serves some countries better than others. Now, when prosperous Ireland faces the moral and legal obligation to welcome those fleeing war, persecution



and poverty, too many voices cry, ‘Ireland is full.’ Full maybe of fear, prejudice and forgetfulness? For a people whose history is steeped in emigration, whose ancestors sought refuge and opportunity on foreign shores, such rhetoric is not only ironic; it is shameful.

The hypocrisy runs deep. We celebrate our diaspora, boasting of Irish influence in America, Australia and beyond. We cherish stories of doors opened to our grandparents when famine and poverty drove them from these shores. We know in our lived history what forced migration looks like. And yet, when the same desperation knocks at our door, we



bolt it shut. This is not patriotism; it is amnesia.

Our obligations are clear. Legally, as signatories to international conventions, we are bound to protect those seeking asylum. Morally, as a nation that claims Christian values and human dignity, we are called to welcome the stranger. Pope Francis reminds us that ‘migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who share a legitimate desire for security and happiness.’ These are not optional extras. They are the price of justice and the measure of our humanity.

Some argue that resources are

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scarce, that communities are under pressure. These concerns deserve attention, but they cannot justify hostility or hatred. The real challenge is not the presence of migrants. It is the failure of political will to plan, invest and communicate honestly. Scapegoating the vulnerable is the oldest trick in the book and the cheapest.

If the Tricolour means anything today, it must stand for solidarity. It must remind us that peace is not passive; it demands courage. It demands that we resist the easy slogans of fear and embrace the hard work of inclusion. To honour our flag is to honour our history, not by retreating into nostalgia but by living its promise in the present.

Ireland is wealthy. Ireland is capable. Ireland is better than this. Let us prove it, not with words but with deeds. Let us ensure that when the Tricolour flies, it signals not division but dignity, not exclusion but embrace. For in welcoming the stranger, we do not weaken our nation; we strengthen its soul.