

DOMHNALL CAM Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN BHÉARA'S ADDRESS TO HIS FOLLOWERS.

Taken from *Ireland under Elizabeth*, an English translation by Matthew J. Byrne of Pilib Ó Súilleabháin's *Historiae Catholicae Iberniae*, published in Latin in 1612. The address is believed to have been given on 7 January 1603 during the 500-kilometre long O'Sullivan's March, prior to Domhnall Cam Ó Súilleabháin's victory over a numerically superior Royalist force at the banks of the River Shannon in County Tipperary.

Since on this day our desperate circumstances and unhappy fate have left us neither wealth, nor country, nor children, nor wives to fight for, but, as on this instant the struggle with our enemies is for the life that alone remains to us, which of you, I ask in God's eternal name, will not rather fall fighting gloriously in battle and avenging your blood, than like cattle, which have no sense of honour, perish unavenged in cowardly flight?

Surely our ancestors, heroes famed for their high spirits, would never seek by a shameful flight to shun an honourable death even when they could fly. For us it will be proper to follow in their footsteps, especially as flight offers no salvation. See the plain stretching far and wide without hindrance of bog, without thick woods, without any hiding-places to which we could fly for concealment. The neighbouring people are no protection for us. There is none to come to our aid. The enemy block the roads and passes, and we, wearied with our long journey, are unable to run.

Whatever chance we have is only in our own courage and strength of our own arms. Up, then, and on them, whom you excel in spirit, courage, achievements past, and holy faith. Let us remember this day that enemies who have everywhere attacked us have heretofore been routed by the Divine mercy. Above all let us believe that the victory is the gift of God. Let us think that Christ our Lord

will be with His servants in their utmost need, and that for His name and holy faith we join issue with heretics and their abettors.

Fear not the worthless mob of enemies who are not as used to fight as we are, much less as famous. Wherefore, I do hope they will turn tail when they shall see us heartily resist, even as I expect you will show forth your faith and courage.