

## STATEMENT

On

### **“MIXED” WORSHIP**

20 March 1978

Asked to comment on the recent reply of the minister for plural Relations and Development in connection with Blacks worshipping together with White people, Archbishop Fitzgerald commented as follows:

“It is accepted that this reply was in answer to a query by a particular Church. One can assume, therefore, that it was directed to the precise problems of that Church and is valid for and applicably only to it.

There is, however, a disquieting feature to the reply as reported in the press and that is, the seeming implication that the State exercises the right to decide as to who will or will not take part in public worship and deliberation in the Church.

In relation to the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church, it must be noted that worship and deliberation together, in the Church, is in principle open to the full participation of all members of the Church without exception. Allowing for some regrettable lapses within the Christian community in this respect, this has been and continues to be a normal practise within the Church.

The Church is of course, respectful of the laws of the State – not necessarily the policy of a particular party – in as much as these are respectful of the teachings of the Christian Church as expressed in the Gospel and in the living tradition of the Church. It disallows, however any authority or interference on the part of Civil authority in matters concerning common worship and deliberation, residential or otherwise, in matters of Christian living.

“As applied to the teaching and practise of the Roman Catholic Church the reply of the Minister, again as reported in the press, must be considered as tending to establish an unacceptable precedent by requiring State approval or authority for common worship, deliberation and full participation, residential if necessary, therein.”