

## On visiting the prisoner

Dungavel tonight...

Mohamed Imran, eyes admitting terror, served your removal directions: next Thursday, flight to Islamabad.

Though we have previously talked and communicated quite well, tonight the words would not come (your friend said you have been vomiting with the fear);

you showed me a letter you sent,

a last-ditch appeal - recently

a young Pakistani woman was returned to Islamabad by UKBA,

having 'failed' to gain asylum - (how can a person be 'failed', I'm sorry, the words don't fit) -

and at the airport she was kidnapped and shortly after killed.

'A property matter', as it was reported.

You yourself know well enough what a 'property matter' can entail;

already they have killed your father, uncle and cousin.

You have made your case,

(in a language which in this dark hour fails you),

appealed and waited -

the months in detention punctuated by faxed imperatives and notifications

- all to no avail.

Now the legal channels give way to security escorts,

who will draw their pay for delivering you to Islamabad and

to what - ?

Tonight we barely spoke; helpless,

you asked what I could do,

to which I replied (truthfully?)

nothing.

My country;

my government;

my law;

nothing.

One by one, they inch you towards that plane,

no doubt you will hear the refrain,

"I'm just doing my job, mate".

As if any job, any ruling, any policy

could be deserving of uncritical obedience.

I hope, I pray -

because I don't assume you're deceitful unless proven otherwise -

that your wretching,

the very fear that tears away at your core,

all the vomit - that it is for nothing.

That - inshallah - all will be well.

That despite the cruelty you were dealt in my country,

you'll somehow escape -

that you be able to

rebuild the life denied you here.

This - my wish for you - is at least

something more than the 'nothing'

I had to offer tonight;

for that,  
I am sorry.

'If you can live amidst injustice without anger, you are immoral as well as unjust'. Aquinas