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Interview with Fr. Gerry Reynolds from Clonard Monastery  
on Radio Ulster, 7 April 1987

Presenter: "As the family postponed the funeral for the second time, Fr. Reynolds spoke for the first time of his deep regret at failing to prevent confrontation between mourners and the RUC."

Fr. Reynolds: Sadly it didn't work out. I think it's a very complicated situation. On one side, maybe on the nationalists side, the whole thing is perceived as a confrontation or a conflict between the RUC and a bereaved family and the whole indignity of that, of preventing a man from being buried with dignity, being accompanied by the people who mourn him to the grave, but on the RUC side, it's seen, I think primarily as a confrontation between them and the Republican movement and because of the whole history of our troubles here in Northern Ireland, I mean, the RUC and Republican movement have been building up one against the other and it's very tense and difficult now. I don't think I want to put the blame on anybody. I'm just looking for a way in which the whole thing can be solved with dignity. I think the police too are aware of the dimension of the family and the family heartbreak in being unable to bury ...Mrs. Marley... her dead husband and the family, their dead father and all the relatives.

Interviewer: Was anybody else involved in trying to mediate between the two sides?

Fr. Reynolds: Well, the local priests in Holycross were involved and other priests from the Sacred Heart were involved and with me was a very close friend of mine, The Rev Sam Birch, a Methodist Minister from Cornerstone community. We've worked

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together a lot in trying to comfort and help people on both sides to, you know to come through bereavement and heartbreak through people getting killed. One of my deepest wishes, strongest wishes, and hopes and prayers is that nobody gets killed in all this confrontation. There is a sense of a basic indignity at the heart of it all, that a man who is dead is not allowed to be buried. I really think that the police should take that aspect of it into account and give space to the funeral today and not to flank it so closely that there will be a further breakdown today and I think everyone of us in the community needs to pray that God will grant his spirit of peace and calm and good sense to everybody, to all the people who are there to mourn, that they should be there only to mourn, not to confront the police. I think if that could be the primary motive of people attending a funeral today, to mourn a dead colleague, the people of the republican movement and the police to take that into account, that people are here to mourn. Even yesterday, I am certain that both sides wanted the funeral to go ahead yesterday and it was a great great pity that, you know, the confrontational dimension came to the forefront and that it didn't remain as a time of mourning. It is essentially a mourning time, it isn't a demonstration time and it's not a time for the republican movement to demonstrate their strength or a time for the police to demonstrate their strength. It's a time when the whole community should be grieving for another human being whose life is being lost in this political struggle, because as I said on another occasion, you know the loss of any person's life in this is an unspeakable and tragic absurdity that anybody's life should be lost in this struggle. We've had too many lives lost, precious people, father of a family, husband, a man who had done so many years in jail. I would appeal really from my heart to everybody, you know, to back off the confrontation.