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# The Derry Journal

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## The skies wept, too, as Derry laid its dead to rest

Two pictures that need no words to tell their story. Poignantly they illustrate the heartbreak that is Derry's.

IRELAND WAS UNITED in grief on Wednesday. St. Mary's Church in the Creggan estate was the centre of world attention for a poignant hour as Derry buried its murdered dead.

Church and State, priests and people, joined in a unique ceremony which expressed the emotion of a sorrowing nation.

From north and south, from east and west they came, the mourning thousands, to honour the dead, to comfort the bereaved, to pledge by their living presence a Christian response to horrific tragedy.

There were few dry eyes among the distinguished congregation. Outside the thronging thousands ignored the bitter cold, and even the driving rain seemed Heaven's tears.

There were the 200 priests from every corner of the land, most making their first visit to Derry on this sad pilgrimage.

There were the hundreds of stricken relatives, sustained however by the overwhelming manifestation of a national sharing in their individual grief.

There were the thousands of people from all parts of the land, many of whom had made long and arduous journeys to be present.

There were the deeply-affected thousands of local people from every area, every street, of the city, present in mourning accord to share in yet another tragic but historic occasion in the

serried story of their city, on ground hallowed centuries ago by the blood of martyrs.

There was the angelically-rendered music from the choir, which blended so wonderfully with the rich liturgy of Church ceremonial, performed beneath the blinding glare of twentieth century communication paraphernalia.

### Heart-Rending Ceremony

There were the central figures of His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Farren, Bishop of Derry, officiating at the most heart-rending ceremony of his long episcopate, and the

twelve black-robed priests, who concelebrated the Solemn Requiem Mass with him, which had drawn together such a vast and reverent multitude.

Seven of those priests had, seventy-two hours earlier, shared with their people in the Bogside the terror unleashed on the streets and risked injury and death to bring succour and the Last Rites of the Church to dead and dying.

And, before the high altar, thirteen coffins reposed, the stark reminders of the purpose of the sombre gathering, containing the remains of thirteen young men, struck down ere they could experience a normal

life span. There was His Eminence Cardinal Conway, an impressive figure in his traditional garb of a Prince of the Church, Most Rev. Dr. Anthony MacFeely, Bishop of Raphoe, come to underline the identity of feeling of his neighbouring diocese with the people of Derry, with whom he has so many personal ties; there were five Irish Government Ministers, symbols of the nation's homage to suffering Derry; nine brightly-robed Mayors from Twenty-six County cities and towns, representing their people present in spirit if unable to make the journey physically; there were the elected public representatives of all the people from the northernmost end to the southernmost tip of the country, illustrating the indivisibility of the land and the nation.

Many of the relatives, overcome by the immensity of the tragedy, broke down and wept. Doctors and Knights of Malta moved swiftly and noiselessly to give medical aid and comfort to those whose emotions became uncontrollable as the true significance of the size of the loss struck with stunning clarity.

### Sorrow and Compassion

The crowded church was hushed as His Lordship put in words the thoughts of everyone, in slow and measured tones which illustrated his

own deep feeling for his bereaved flock. He spoke in sorrow and with compassion and appealed for Christian forbearance in the face of the terrible events that had made necessary the nation-wide act of homage in the Creggan church.

And then, as the ceremony ended, began the last sad journey. One by one the coffins were borne out of the church, down the aisle by relatives and friends, the congregation standing in final salutation to the dead.

First there was the funeral procession of Bernard McGuigan, then John Young, then Jackie Duddy, then Jim Wray, then Gerard Donaghy, then Michael McDaid, then

William McKinney, whose body was transferred to the chapel mortuary for burial yesterday.

Then together, to be buried side by side, came the remains of William Nash, Kevin McElhinney, Hugh Gilmour, Patrick Doherty and Michael Kelly.

The remains of Gerald McKinney were removed to Iskaheen for burial in Iskaheen graveyard.

### Weeping Mourners

As the funerals moved down the short hill to the city cemetery many of the

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