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Reference Code: 2003/17/335

Title: Statement given on RTÉ [Raidió Teilifís Éireann] by Father Edward Daly, a curate at St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, detailing his personal experiences of 'Bloody Sunday', 30 January, 1972.

Creation Date(s): 31 January, 1972

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 2 pages

Creator(s): Department of Foreign Affairs

Access Conditions: Open

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Statement by Father Edward Daly, a curate at
St. Eugene's Cathedral Derry on RTE's News
at 1.30 on 31st January 1972

Father Daly takes up the story as the army came in and tells what happened when he started to run from the troops:

"As I was about half way across the court of the flats, I heard the first shot. A little boy who was running - a boy of about 16 - beside me and slightly behind me actually - about five feet from me. He screamed and groaned and fell to the ground. I thought he was hit by a rubber bullet first of all. I looked back and then I heard more shooting and I just lay flat on the ground. I looked back over my shoulder and I saw a woman being run over by a saracen, it was driven straight at her. I saw blood spurting from this boy's chest out through his shirt. I crawled back over. There was a young Knight's of Malta lad and myself. I administered the last rites to this boy who I think died almost instantly.

Q. You are satisfied that this boy was not firing a gun?

A. No, absolutely. No, he was running beside me. He was doing the same thing as I was doing:- trying to get out of the place as fast as he could. There were no guns fired at the army. Anything that the army say about that is absolutely untruthful. This is an occasion that I saw completely from the start with my own eyes. I am prepared to swear this. I hope I have an opportunity to do it in front of some international tribunal. I have no doubt whatsoever - I state this absolutely categorically - that there were no shots fired at the army prior to them opening fire. The army kept firing for a period - I just don't know how long it was - I was lying there out in the courtyard beside this little boy and the Knights of Malta lad. I know that he was weeping and I think I was weeping too, out of fear or just the whole horror of the thing. I saw another boy about 20 yards from the flats being hit. He tumbled over. He screamed and one of his legs went up grotesquely in the air and whirled around. Its a sight I shall never forget. To be quite honest I was too frightened to go over to him. I just stayed with the little boy I was with. And after a while then two other civilians crawled out with white handkerchiefs. They took up positions beside us out in the middle of the flats courtyard. We decided to try to get the little boy. We thought he was dead but we decided to try to get him to some first-aid post or other. We crouched and waved handkerchiefs. It was covered with the wee lad's blood. We had to cross in front of them and along Chamberlain street. He was carried by these other men and eventually we got through the army lines and eventually we got to Waterloo street and there I managed to get an ambulance to take him to hospital but he was dead.

Q. What are the priests going to do now Father.

A. There is a large number of priests from this parish and other parishes who came on the scene. The word spread through the city very quickly. Some of them had been there for the meeting, then there was big crowds around. We would normally be around just to calm other people. We have often had to evacuate them from gas. We have been acceptable being able to travel being neutral in the thing and help to rescue injured and that sort of thing. It is our normal procedure in a big demonstration that we always make it our business to be around. We have done so for the last three years but all of us who witnessed it as priests know that there were no shots fired; that anything that the army says to the contrary is absolutely untruthful. We are convinced of that, we know that because we saw that with our own eyes.

Q. What do you want anyhow. What do you think should be done.

A. Well, I just don't know. I mean these people here have suffered for so long. I think it is about time that something was done on an international level. Obviously

Britain is not either willing or interested in doing anything. I think that the Government of the South bears tremendous responsibility to do something. I think that they are the only people who have international influence and a word in an international forum. I think they must do something.

Q. What would you like to see the South doing now, Father.

A. I don't know the ins and outs of diplomacy. I am not aware of them. I am a mere curate here. I am not politically much aware really but I just feel that something must be done for these people. They have suffered so long.

Q. Do they feel let down by the South.

A. They do I think. I must say that I just don't know really, I mean something has got to be done. I think that the army has got to be got out of Derry fast, as quickly as possible. I don't think they are acceptable here at all. They will never be acceptable again to the people of this area.

Q. There has been talk over the past year or so about United Nations troops. Do you think the people of Derry would accept UN troops.

A. I think they would. Derry people are very fair minded people. Until the British army stained and blotted their copy book they accepted the British army. Remember that it is only recently that this revulsion started at the treatment that the army have handed out to people. It has changed the whole situation completely.

Q. Will the British Army ever be accepted in Derry after yesterday.

A. Now I can't see it at all. They were very acceptable even prior to yesterday, but certainly after yesterday if you see 13 people mowed down like that; many many other people injured, wounded and just people shot up generally. One is supposed to turn the other cheek but somebody said one time we are fast running out of cheeks.