

# Fr Gerry Reynolds R.I.P.. Association of Catholic Priests

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 [associationofcatholicpriests.ie/2015/11/fr-gerry-reynolds-r-i-p/](http://associationofcatholicpriests.ie/2015/11/fr-gerry-reynolds-r-i-p/)

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-34963015>

## **Peacemaker priest Fr Gerry Reynolds from Belfast's Clonard Monastery dies**

Father Gerry Reynolds, a Redemptorist priest who worked for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, has died.

Father Reynolds was based at Clonard Monastery in west Belfast for more than 30 years.

The monastery was once described by Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams as “the cradle of the peace process”.

With his friend and fellow priest, Father Alex Reid, Fr Reynolds was deeply committed to brokering peace.

Fr Reid acted as a go-between for the IRA and politicians and was one of the witnesses who confirmed the decommissioning of IRA weapons. He died two years ago.

Gerry Adams described Fr Reynolds as “a champion of the peace process”.

“He was central to efforts to develop a peace process years before it eventually took root. I want to extend to his family, and to colleagues in the Redemptorist Order, and to his many friends my sincerest condolences.”

### Early Life

Fr Reynolds was born in Limerick. His father died when he was six years old. His mother was deeply religious and two of his uncles were Redemptorist Priests.

He, too, found he had a vocation and was ordained a priest in 1960.

He worked in ministries in the Republic of Ireland until 1983, when he came to Clonard monastery.

In an interview with journalist Sue Leonard in 2009 for the Catholic magazine, Reality, he said that when he came to the city there was one challenge.

“It was ‘How do you stop the killing?’”, he said.

Fr Reynolds was a committed ecumenist, reaching out to other churches was vital to him.

“He was instrumental in helping to facilitate discussions between members of the Protestant churches and Irish republicans,” Mr Adams said.

Clonard is the focus of the project, Unity Pilgrims, where parishioners attend not only Sunday Mass; but also visit Presbyterian, Methodist or Church of Ireland Churches and the Clonard-Fitzroy Fellowship.

The links between Fitzroy Presbyterian Church and Clonard began in 1981 and were about encouraging mutual understanding and respect. In latter years, Fr Reynolds gave leadership on the Clonard side.

In his interview with Reality, Fr Reynolds said: “The people have changed since peace.

“But there is always work to be done. Every generation is like a continent to be won for Christ. That missionary task remains.”

Fr Reynolds loved poetry, particularly Patrick Kavanagh, Seamus Heaney and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

He died on at Belfast’s Royal Victoria Hospital on Monday after a short illness.

In a statement, the Redemptorist community at Clonard said: “He will be greatly missed by his Redemptorist confreres and colleagues, his family, friends, and the many people whose lives he touched through his ecumenical, peace and reconciliation ministries.”

<http://www.u.tv/News/2015/11/30/Champion-of-peace-Fr-Gerry-Reynolds-dies-49761>

*Story by UTV Staff, Belfast*

### **‘Champion of peace’ Fr Gerry Reynolds dies**

Fr Gerry Reynolds, one of the most prominent priests in the move towards peace in Northern Ireland has died.

Fr Reynolds, along with Fr Alex Reid, worked to end violence in Northern Ireland throughout the Troubles.

Fr Reid was one of the witnesses to the decommissioning of weapons by the IRA.

The news of his passing was confirmed in a statement issued by Fr Noel Kehoe, Rector at Clonard Monastery.

“It is with deep regret that the Redemptorist Community at Clonard announce the death of Fr. Gerry Reynolds C.Ss.R,” it read.

“Fr. Gerry passed away in the care of the Royal Victoria hospital at 6.50am this morning, 30th November 2015 after a short illness.

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams said that Fr Reynolds was a “champion of the peace process.”

“Along with Fr. Reid and Fr. Des Wilson he was central to efforts to develop a peace process years before it eventually took root and he believed totally in the primacy of dialogue,” he said.

“Fr. Reynolds was part of the Clonard Church Ministry, a special peace-making ministry within the Redemptorist Order.

“It was based on the historic tradition of the Church’s providing sanctuary and was focussed on the importance of compassion as “the first principle of all human relationships.”

“Fr. Reynolds embraced the importance of dialogue with other churches.

“I want to extend to his family, and to colleagues in the Redemptorist Order, and to his many friends my sincerest condolences.”

Ulster Unionist Party leader Mike Nesbitt paid tribute to the work that the Redemptorist priest had done throughout the years.

“I knew him from my days in journalism when he was a vocal and visible member of the faith community pushing politicians to stretch themselves for peace,” he said.

“Alongside the late Father Alec Reid and others he was instrumental in the quiet diplomacy that was one of the foundation stones that led to the Belfast Agreement in 1998.”

The SDLP’s Alex Attwood also expressed his condolences and said that Fr Reynolds shared close links with his family.

“He was forever working to make peace. His special work with Fr Alec Reid was one example of this. His life was defined by such work, seeking out the opportunity for good to prevail.

“He was devoted to the monastery, the people of Clonard and all of West Belfast. He brought Christian witness into private lives and public spaces.

“My family have also lost a great friend. Gerry was at our wedding, baptised our daughter Nora and concelebrated my mother’s funeral mass in May.

“At birth, during life and at death Fr Gerry Reynolds was part of the lives of many, many people. He was deeply loved.”