

OUT ON THE STREETS

Mary Kelly



Well basically what happened was that I saw kids throwing stones and bottles and I thought -look at all the size of them ; do they realise what's going on ; do they realise the consequences if bigger people got involved ; somebody could end up shot; some child going for a bottle of milk could lose their life because of this. So that's when I went out into the street and thank God I had a couple of people who also came out with me. At the beginning I was more or less just out, as people would say, "slabbering."



This was the start of the "interfaces" when a wee crowd would come up from the Protestant end and a wee crowd from the Catholic end and it was 6 of 1 and half a dozen of the other. I could stand back and see that there were kids caught up in it. I wondered how I could get across there to the "other side" to get to know some of the woman down there so I would be able to say to them to keep their kids away and we on our side would do the same. And then as it flourished and people got to know you, they knew you were doing it for a purpose.

I believed that every man in his house had a responsibility to know where his kids were and what they were doing. We approached lots of parents and asked them if they knew where their kids were and what they were doing? We didn't care what religion they were and warned them that it was time they did know where they were and that they needed to go and get them. My name got around – "she's out there she is," and the kids used to shout – "here come Mary Kelly." You would have thought I was carrying a machine gun.



Nobody really threatened me. You would have got the odd one shouting out their neck – "who do you think you are?" I would say – "I don't think I'm anybody but I'm telling you we're not having it; we're not letting this area go down the tube; I've seen too many areas going down the tube and this one certainly isn't. I've worked too hard buying my house and I'm still paying for it and I'm not putting up with you or anybody taking this away from me and that's the way it's gonna be."

On reflection I would say I still wouldn't let anybody do anything if I thought somebody was in danger. It's my nature; I can't help myself; I would have to get involved no matter who it would be if I thought that somebody was deliberately abusing someone. If I was about I would have to say – "here what's going on?" I can't help my nature. It's not being nosey. The way I look at it is if everybody took that stand – 'well I wouldn't like that done to my child' – then maybe we would have a better place.