

# GORDON WILSON

↓ Gordon Wilson was born in Manorhamilton, County Leitrim. He spent most of his adult life running the family drapery business in High Street, Enniskillen. He was a man of great Christian faith (he attended Enniskillen Methodist Church and studied at Wesley College, Dublin).

On the 8th November 1987 he attended the Remembrance Day Parade in Enniskillen along with his daughter, Marie, who was a nurse. The Provisional IRA set off a bomb at the town's war memorial. The bombing killed eleven people (a twelfth person died after being in coma for 13 years). One of the people who died was Gordon Wilson's daughter, Marie.

He was interviewed by the BBC the same evening. He described his last conversation with his daughter as they both lay buried in rubble. In the interview he expressed forgiveness to his daughter's killers and pleaded with loyalists not to take revenge for her death.

*"She held my hand tightly, and gripped me as hard as she could. She said, 'Daddy, I love you very much.' Those were her exact words to me, and those were the last words I ever heard her say."*

He went on to say.

*"But I bear no ill will. I bear no grudge. Dirty sort of talk is not going to bring her back to life. She was a great wee lassie. She loved her profession. She was a pet. She's dead. She's in heaven and we shall meet again. I will pray for these men tonight and every night."*

Historian Jonathan Bardon recounts, *"No words in more than twenty-five years of violence in Northern Ireland had such a powerful, emotional impact."*

Although a resident of Northern Ireland, he was invited to become a member of the Senate of Ireland in 1993, on the nomination of the then Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds. On many occasions he met with members of Sinn Féin. He also met once with representatives of Provisional IRA, seeking the reasons for the Enniskillen Remembrance Day bombing. He felt that he failed to get a satisfactory answer. He also met several times with loyalist paramilitaries in an attempt to persuade them to abandon violence.

He died of a heart attack in 1995, aged 67.

