

**BBC RADIO ULSTER
THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
13th March 2009**

It's been a dark and shocking seven days here.

But we are not going back.

For those of us who remember the darkness of the past it has been painful.

But we are not going back.

For those who are too young to remember the darkness of the past it has been frightening.

And they are not going back.

On Wednesday I stood in silence with thousands of people of all backgrounds, religions and ages at the City Hall in Belfast. We stood together, along with thousands of others across Northern Ireland. We stood shoulder to shoulder for an end to killing and a peaceful future.

And this week our political leaders, community leaders and church leaders stood together, shoulder to shoulder, against the attacks on our peace.

We are not going back.

On this very day in 1964 there was another shocking and horrific murder in New York. A young woman called Kitty Genovese was stabbed to death. Newspaper reports at the time claimed that 38 witnesses watched the attack but failed to intervene or even contact the police.

Social psychologists called it the bystander effect. They say the greater the number of bystanders, the less likely we are to do anything in an emergency situation.

We leave it to someone else.

We pass by on the other side.

Northern Ireland in 2009 is not a time to be a bystander.

It's not a time to leave it to someone else.

Or to pass by on the other side.

We all have a part to play in building a better future.

Free from violence and bitterness and segregation.

This is a moment for action and moving forward.

Do what you can, say what you can to protect our prosperous future.

I believe the day will come when the people of Northern Ireland of all religions and backgrounds will live together, learn together, play together and laugh together.

But we need to make it happen.

This is a day for mourning.

Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

And this is a time to build peace.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God.

Let us not be bystanders.

We are not going back.

Tony Macaulay