

**Teresa Kelly RIP**  
**Funeral Mass**  
**Errill Church**  
**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

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Teresa Kelly (nee Maher), Village View, Errill, Co. Laois, November 15th 2020. Peacefully, in the presence of her family. Predeceased by her **husband Patsy**, her daughter **Teresa** and her sons **Eddie and Pat**. Sadly mourned by her loving family, **Mary, Josephine, Seamus, Deirdre and Raymond**, son-in-law Adrien, grandchildren, Damien, Emma, Dylan, Saoirse and Daragh, her sisters Grett and Sally, nieces, nephews, relatives, neighbours and friends.

**Homily**

*I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown". And he replied "Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, and safer than a known way."* God Knows

Ever since I visited you at home in Village View yesterday, I was thinking a lot about that wedding photograph of your mam and dad taken on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1968. Their wedding took place in Roscrea. I assume the reason for Roscrea was because your mam had become very familiar with that church and indeed with the priests there because she had been working with them as their housekeeper for a number of years. But what I was really thinking about was the promises Teresa and Patsy would have made to each other on that day. Among the words and promises they made were the most significant and the most profound words one human being can say to another.

The priest would have begun by asking them both a few questions; Have you come here of your own free will and choice to marry each other? And Teresa and Patsy would have said simply; WE HAVE. And

wrapped up in those two simple words was the whole story of their relationship up to that point, from the night they had met at the Las Vegas Ballroom in Templemore through their courtship which involved Patsy relying on his friends like Martin Tynan and Harry Wynn giving him a lift over to Borrisakane or Roscrea to meet Teresa. Somewhere along that journey they both realised that they loved each other and wanted to marry each other. And so YES they had arrived at that altar in Roscrea absolutely by their own free will and choice to marry each other.

Next question the priest asked: Patsy and Teresa, will you love and honour each other in marriage all the days of your life? Together they answered: WE WILL

The third question: Are you willing to accept, with love the children God may send you and bring them up in accordance with the law of Christ and his church? And Patsy and Teresa said WE ARE

And then to each they said: I Patsy, take you Teresa as my wife for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, all the days of our lives. **I Teresa, take you Patsy** as my husband for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, all the days of our lives.

That exchange of words and sentences probably took less than five minutes of their wedding day but the implications and the consequences of those words, particularly for your mother Teresa were to be enormous. On that July day in 1968, your dad was 34, your mam was 27. Two young people looking forward to a long and happy future together. But the meaning of those phrases like for better for worse' 'in sickness and in health, 'all the days of our lives' were to be tested so much quicker than would have been expected or hoped for. 'All the days of our life' was to be just thirteen years until Patsy died in 1981. Ray, you were just an infant a few months old. They had already lost a little infant boy and Teresa at 14 months old. Just a few weeks after Patsy, his dad, your grandad, Paddy who have lived with ye in Knockardgannon also died. Teresa, your mam must have been broken hearted as she standing

at the foot of the cross. But as we know she was to return to the foot of that cross on two further occasions on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 1989 and the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 1999. I thought of that question put to your mam and dad in Roscrea in July '68 'Are you willing to accept, with love the children God may send you' Your mother's YES to that question cost her so much and I can't even begin to imagine the depths of sorrow and pain she must have endured. But somewhere, somehow Teresa managed to pick herself and her life up each time that cross bore down on her frail shoulders. A clue to the somewhere and the somehow is found I believe in that First Reading today from the Book of Proverbs which as I realised was the reading at Mass on Sunday, the day Teresa died.

**Who shall find a valiant woman?**

**Who shall find a woman of strength?**

She is worth far more than jewels.

Her associates all have confidence in her and benefit from her expertise.

**She invites good, not evil, every day of her life.**

**She does not neglect her tasks;**

**She willingly works with her hands.**

**She works diligently, taking pride in her inner resources and strengths.**

She opens her heart to the needy, she is generous to the poor.

**She is strong and respected, and not afraid of the future.**

She speaks with wisdom, and she teaches in a kindly way.

Those who are close to her praise her.

**Charm is superficial and beauty fades,**

**But the woman who honours the Lord is to be praised**

Another clue to what sustained Teresa in those most difficult days was in that beautiful poem on the wall of your home in Village View entitled the Gate of The Year

*I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown". And he replied "Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, and safer than a known way." God Knows*

Teresa could obviously call on her own inner resources and strengths but most of all in that darkness which threatened to overpower her on a number of occasions she put her hand into the Hand of God.

This afternoon as we gather here in Errill to say farewell to this valiant woman we gently place her one final time into the Hand of God who will take her by the hand and guide her to an honoured place in Heaven. To quote St. Paul in that second reading today;

Teresa, you have fought the good fight, you have finished the race and you have certainly kept the Faith...Henceforth there is definitely is a crown of righteousness waiting for you

May your gentle soul rest in Peace