

Maura Daly RIP
Funeral Mass
Rathdowney Church
Saturday 13th August 2022

Maura Daly (nee Matthews), Johnstown Glebe, Rathdowney, Co. Laois and formerly of Main Street, Killimor, Co. Galway. Passed away on the 10th of August 2022 at 6pm in the arms of her husband Tom and her four children and the wonderful staff of Mount Hybla Nursing Home, Castleknock, Dublin 15. She will be sadly missed by her loving husband Tom, son Kieran, daughters Caroline, Eleanor and Rose-Marie, sons-in-law Liam and Colm, grandchildren Marie, Roisin, Lilly, Matthew, Daniel, Conor, her sister Aggie, brother-in-law Padhraigh, nephews, nieces, close family, friends, neighbours and her colleagues at the Midlands Regional Hospital, Portlaoise.

Greeting on webcam Mary Daly in Boston and her Daughter Mary Judith and son Kevin and their families

**Symbols: Family photograph and pack of cards (Matthew)
Cookery Book and Nursing Badge (Aggie)**

Readers: Eleanor and Rosemary

Prayers:

Bread and Wine: Liam and Colm

When someone moves into a new community it can be a challenging experience. You have left the security and comfort of familiar surroundings and the everyday contact with friendly faces you have known all your life. I make that comment today because I suspect that was something of Maura Daly's experience when she first came here to live in the late summer of 1971. Maura and Tom lived in an apartment, probably called a flat then in Main Street where the front part of Midland Hardware now is. Maura had come from Killimor and the very busy life of a family pub where so much of community life revolved around. I was not totally surprised to hear that Maura's new life in

Rathdowney significantly changed for the better when one of her neighbours from the Butcher shop across the street came to welcome her and offer the hand of friendship. Teresa Cahill not only brought friendship but also encouragement to take up one of the hobbies which she herself enjoyed and indeed excelled at. And so began Maura's career and love of bridge.

Every time you open the hand of thirteen cards dealt to you at the Bridge table, it is a new experience. As you look at those cards you know that if it is a really good hand there will be little difficulty playing them. If it is a really bad hand, you will have even less difficulty playing them. The challenge comes when you are dealt a hand which is a mixture of good, bad and middle of the road cards. Such a hand requires a fair bit of skill and sometimes a lot of good luck as well. In truth most of our lives reflect that third hand of cards and the story of our life is the account of how we played the hand we were dealt.

Last Wednesday evening Maura Daly's earthly life came to a close just a few days short of her 79th birthday. Maura's story, his hand of cards is in some sense laid out before us today as we gather here for her funeral mass.

Maura's life began in the village of Killimor Co. Galway on the 19th of August 1943. The first great loss of her life was the death of her mother when Maura was just one year old. Maura and her younger sister Aggie were cared for by loving relatives and when their father remarried some years later, they were to be blessed with a wonderful new maternal influence in their young lives. Following her secondary school education in Portumna Maura began her nursing training at the Richmond hospital in Dublin in 1966. When back home in Killimor Maura would always help out in the local family pub business. One Sunday evening in August 1970 she left the pub early to go to local Marquee Dancing festival. The main reason Maura went up to the dance was to meet the local hurling team who had won a big game earlier in the day. It was a decision that would change her life dramatically. Those of you who lived through that unique social phenomenon of the 1970's will be able

to identify with the scene. A large tent in rural Ireland teeming with young people dancing to the sounds of Big Tom, The big Eight, The Indians, the Conquerors or some other household name. Maura is asked to dance by a young Offaly man who when he woke up in his Rathdowney digs on that Sunday morning, the last place he expected to end up that night was a dance in a marquee in Killimor. Tom had gone home to visit his parents in Banagher, but they were not at home. He picked up the local paper to catch up on the news and spots an ad for the Marquee dance in Killimor. He heads off to the event in the tent and having braved his way through the teeming masses he spots this beautiful young woman whom he approaches and asks to dance. The rest as they say is history. Tom, as I reflected on your account of how you met I thought of that beautiful line from the American poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson when he said: **People destined to meet...will do so, apparently by chance, at precisely the right moment**

Tom and Maura were married in Rome eight months later during Easter 1971. Last night I spoke to Fr. Tom Norris the priest who performed your wedding ceremony fifty-one years ago. He is unwell at the moment and apologises that he cannot be here today. He sends you his deepest sympathy.

Later in 1971 Tom and Maura settled down here in Rathdowney. Those early years were full of new beginnings, the building of their new home in Johnstown Glebe, the births of their four children: Kieran, Caroline, Eleanor and Rose-Marie. Maura proved to be the consummate home maker; the valiant woman described so aptly in that first reading today from the Book of Proverbs. The woman of strength who could multi-task before the term was invented, the woman *who did not neglect her tasks, who worked willingly with her hands*, those hands that could produce award winning culinary creations were also the hands that held countless books which she read constantly to her children. Through it all there was that smile which so many people commented on in the condolence page of RIP.ie. *She speaks with wisdom and teaches in a kindly way*. Tom, you spoke to me the other day about that quality that you so admired in Maura, and that was her resistance to making judgements of

other people, a quality she acknowledged she had learned from her father.

This is the woman whose life we honour and celebrate today, this is the woman we will honour with Christian burial later in Bealady.

Maura's first vocation in life was to be a nurse and while she loved being a wife and mother, I think she also longed to return to nursing. As you acknowledged to me Tom, no challenge was too great for Maura, and she found a way to return to the career she loved. Her first return to nursing job involved her getting a train every day from Ballybrophy to work at the Phoenix Park hospital. Later she would secure a position in Portlaoise where she enjoyed many years of dedicated work.

It takes a very special person to be a good nurse. Sometimes nurses are spoken about in a patronising way, and I certainly don't wish to do that today but as a priest I go into to hospitals and care centres regularly and I see the extraordinary service that nurses give. They meet people at their most vulnerable and their care for them is something they never forget. I chose that gospel today because in some way I always think that nurses have a unique opportunity to make real the significant sentence in the passage "*Whatever you do to the least of these brothers and sisters of mine you do it to me*" I recently came across a piece which is simply called a Nurse's prayer and in so many ways it is a retelling of today's gospel. It is God's address to a nurse:

*Be me in the world.
Be my voice to the deaf.
Be my faith where there is doubt.
Be my hope where there is despair.
Be my light where there is darkness.
Be my joy where there is sadness.
Be me in the world.*

*Be my eyes to the blind.
Be my consolation to those who need to be consoled.
Be my understanding to those who need to be understood.*

*Be my healing to those who need to be healed.
Be my love to those who need love.
Be my forgiveness to those who need to be forgiven.
Be my death to those who need me.
Be me in the world.*

- author unknown -

In her many years of nursing how many times must Maura Daly have made that prayer a reality. We give thanks today for her life and her dedication.

In conclusion, I just want again to extend on my own behalf and of this parish community our sincere sympathies to you, Tom, Kieran, Caroline, Eleanor and Rose-Marie, Aggie and all of Maura's extended family and friends. Despite what the words of that beautiful song we will hear later say the book of love which has been Maura Daly nee Matthews' life has been anything but long and boring. It has been full of music and dance and flowers and heart shaped boxes, wedding rings and a myriad of other blessings. As we close Maura's book of love today, I want to leave you with the words of a beautiful poem written by the Donegal poet, Patrick Magill

FROM DEDICATION

BY PATRICK MACGILL)

"I speak of the (old) women
Who danced to yesterday's fiddle
And dance no longer.
They sit in a quiet place and dream
And see visions
Of what is to come,
Of their (issue) children,
(Which) who have blossomed to manhood and womanhood –

And seeing thus
They are happy
For the day that was, leaves no regrets,
And peace is theirs
And perfection.”

Maura, May that Peace and Perfection of Heaven be yours this day,

The book of love is long and boring
No one can lift the damn thing
It's full of charts and facts, some figures
And instructions for dancing
But I
I love it when you read to me
And you
You can read me anything
The book of love has music in it
In fact that's where music comes from
Some of it's just transcendental
Some of it's just really dumb
But I
I love it when you sing to me
And you
You can sing me anything
The book of love is long and boring
And written very long ago
It's full of flowers and heart-shaped boxes
And things we're all too young to know
But I
I love it when you give me things
And you
You ought to give me wedding rings
And I
I love it when you give me things
And you
You ought to give me wedding rings
You ought to give me wedding rings