

Peg Dollard RIP
Funeral Mass
Rathdowney Church
Saturday 12th March 2022

Peg Dollard (Neè Power), Ballyedmond, Rathdowney, Co. Laois. March 11th, 2022. Peacefully at home in the presence of her loving family. Deeply regretted by her loving husband Sean and her adored children, John, Breda, Allison, Christine, Lorraine, Michael and Eamon, loving daughter-in-law Melissa, sons-in-law Ray, Kevin and Brendan and John's partner Michelle, beloved grandchildren Shane and his wife Eileen, Emma and her partner Lisa, Rebecca, Greta, Eddie, Roisin, Isobel, Finbarr, Milly and Patrick. Great-grandchildren Annie, Tommy and Teddy. All Pegs brothers and sisters and all her family in Co. Waterford and her wonderful circle of friends and neighbours and the special people she met on her journey.

There is a famous quote that says a picture paints a thousand words. Somehow, I was reminded of that quote when I saw that very striking picture of Peg which your family published on RIP. There were a number of things which struck me when I reflected on that photograph and hope you won't mind me drawing attention to them. Firstly, it is a picture of a very glamorous and stylish woman. I know from listening to you her daughters that glamour and style were important to Peg. She liked to look her best even on a day she was not going anywhere. And I gather she loved hats and that other head-dress which I believe is known as a Fascinator. I don't know if that picture was taken at a family wedding, but she certainly would not have been out of place in Royal Ascot. The other thing that struck me immediately was of course the colour blue. Was that a favourite colour.? Blue is the colour that connected her county of birth, Waterford and Laois which has been her home for the past 48 years. I think Peg was proud of her Waterford roots and as if to remind herself there is that road sign outside her front door in Ballyedmond which says Old Grange is 65 kilometres away. Peg was born in Old Grange, Carrick on Suir on the first day of June 1942. Like so many of her generation, Peg, as a young teenager headed across the Irish sea to seek work and the prospect of a better standard of living than was available here in Ireland in the late fifties and early sixties. It was also of course the emergence of the showband era and Peg loved music and she

loved to dance. No surprise then that it would be at a dance in one of London's many Irish clubs that Peg would meet the man she was to marry, Sean Dollard from Ballyedmund. They married in London in 1963. The first eleven years of marriage would be spent in London where their first five children were born. In 1974 The young Dollard family came to live in Ballyedmund where later Michael and Eamon were born. I suspect it is more than sixty-five km from Ballyedmund to Old Grange (maybe it is sixty-five miles) and Ballyedmund in 1974 may not have had all the home comforts Peg had become accustomed to in London. Nevertheless, she settled into life here and very much made it her home. Peg's natural inclination to care for others or as that first reading put it 'She opens heart to the needy' led her to a job outside the home caring for others in their own homes. In a way that brings me back to the picture which paints a thousand words and the colour BLUE. Blue is the colour most associated with caring and with healing. Peg loved her job as a home help, and I understand from a number of people that she went above and beyond the call of duty. I had first hand experience of that a few years ago. Two ladies in Quigley Park whom I brought Communion to on First Fridays would regularly tell me that Peg Dollard from Ballyedmund was coming in to take them shopping or just out for lunch.

I think it is fair to say though that while this valiant woman we honour with Christian burial today has been known for many things, daughter, sister, wife, grandmother, great grandmother neighbour, friend, sports fan proud Waterford woman, a dab hand with a paint brush, a very caring and dedicated Home Help to many, despite all those titles and attributes I believe Peg was most defined by her role as mother to you John, Breda, Allison, Christine, Lorraine, Michael and Eamon,

I was reminded again of a beautiful poem that I came across some years ago. It was written by Mary Morrison and it is simply called *Nobody knows but Mother.....*The final verse of the poem contains the following lines:

How many cares does a mother's heart know?

Nobody knows but Mother.

How many joys from her mother love flow?

Nobody knows but Mother.
How many prayers for each little (white) bed?
How many tears for her babes has she shed?
How many kisses for each curly head?
Nobody knows but Mother.

As I listened to you speak of the kind of mother she was, I heard phrases like 'She made everything seem better' 'We could go to her with any problem' 'She did not make judgements' 'She was generous to a fault' Those lines from that first reading from the Book of Proverbs today could perhaps have easily been written about your mother Peg:

*'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.'*

Like all mothers I'm sure that Peg Dollard knew and experienced the joyful, the glorious but also the Sorrowful mysteries of life. What helped her to face the challenges and storms which life inevitably brought to her door? Well, that gentle strength of character combined with a very positive outlook certainly were key. But I would also suggest that behind and beneath those very positive human qualities was Peg's very strong Christian faith which sustained her in good times and in bad. In recent months as Peg's health began to weaken, she embraced this challenge quietly and privately. As she slipped away peacefully yesterday morning she could say with St. Paul *'The time of my departure has come, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race'*

As a final thought today, I want to leave you with some words from Peg's favorite song which in many ways could also be a hymn and

Margaret will sing it as we leave the church. It is called *Far Side Banks of Jordan* by Alison Krauss and sung by Johnny Cash among others. As I looked through the words of that song, I thought that they could so easily be Peg's parting words to all of you whom she loved most.

*I believe my steps are growing wearier each day
Still I've got a journey on my mind
Lures of this old world have ceased to make me want to stay
And my one regret is leaving you behind.*

*...And I'll be waiting on the far side banks of Jordan
I'll be waiting drawing pictures in the sand
And when I see you coming I will rise up with a shout
And come running through the shallow waters reaching for your hand.*

Peg, May your gentle soul rest in Peace.