

Kathleen Kenny RIP
Funeral Mass
Rathdowney Church
Monday 17th October 2022

Kathleen Kenny, Quigley Park, Rathdowney and formerly Ballydavin, Cullohill, Co. Laois. October 14th 2022. Peacefully in the wonderful care of the nurses and staff of Brookhaven Nursing Home, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny. Predeceased by her parents Ann and Edward. Sadly mourned by her relatives and all her friends.

But on the day of our death no matter how quietly we have lived our lives we are summoned in from the shadows and given the central place in our community. Today as we come to celebrate this funeral mass for Kathleen Kenny, I am reminded again of the quote which says that the *"humblest little pond in the depths of the woods reflects some of the glory of the sky, and brings down to earth a little bit of heaven"*

Some weeks ago here at Mass I mentioned a book I had received as a gift entitled *'If I could tell you just one thing'* It is a collection of encounters with famous and remarkable people and in each case the author asks them for the most important piece of advice they would offer to another. One of the people interviewed in the book is former US president Bill Clinton. When the author asked the president what one piece of advice, he would offer his answer was interesting. He said: *'I've come to believe that one of the most important things is to see people. The person who opens the door for you, the person who pours your coffee. Acknowledge them. Show them respect. The traditional greeting of the Zulu people in South Africa is "Sawubona" (saw you bona). It means "I see you". I try and do that.'*

I thought of that piece of advice Bill Clinton gave when I was reflecting on Kathleen's life over the last few days. Physically, Kathleen was a tall person easily picked out in a crowd. But in another sense Kathleen might not have been seen. She lived much of her life under the radar and out of the limelight. Kathleen was born in Ballydavin, Cullohill an only child to Ann and Edward Kenny. Kathleen was to a large extent

protected from many influences outside her tight-knit family unit. Her formal education ended when she left Primary School. She was a devoted daughter who cared for her parents. For ten years after her mother died Kathleen continued in her family home in Ballydavin. In 2005 she made a very significant decision which had a major impact on her life and perhaps on the quality of her life. Kathleen sold her family home in Ballydavin and moved to live in Quigley Park here in Rathdowney. I believe Kathleen loved living here. She particularly loved the idea of being able to walk to the shops and particularly she loved being so close to this church where she came regularly not just for Mass but also for some quiet prayer with her God. It was one of her specific requests that she be able to spend the night before her funeral here in the church. Kathleen's quality of life was greatly enhanced by the people who watched out for her and helped her in so many ways. The security of knowing that you Frank were just door if she needed help. The businesses in town like Fortunes and Howard and his staff in the Pharmacy all helped Kathleen with her essential needs and went that extra mile for her. I think today to of the late Peg Dollard of Ballyedmund. Peg began as a professional carer for Kathleen when she moved into Rathdowney, but that professional relationship developed into a wonderful friendship. I can remember meeting Peg with Kathleen and another neighbour in Quigley Park, Teresa Walsh when Peg would come to bring both ladies out shopping, trips to the monastery, lunch at some of their favourite spots. The three of them are now reunited in heaven and we remember with gratitude that sense of meitheal and kindness which enriched Kathleen's life so much. But more than anyone I want to acknowledge and give thanks today for the extraordinary kindness and friendship which was extended to Kathleen by you Rosarii. Again, a relationship which began in a professional way went way beyond that. I know from my own conversations with Kathleen how precious you were to her. She trusted you completely with every aspect of her care and her life. On behalf of Kathleen can I just say a very big thank for all that you have done but most of all for what and who you have been to this woman we honour with Christian burial today.

None of the people that I have mentioned who befriended Kathleen, cared for her and looked out for her had any real obligation to do what they did. They were not bound to her by any family ties nor were they likely to benefit in any material way by helping her. I would like to think and I'm fairly sure that those many acts of kindness and love were rooted perhaps at times unconsciously, in a belief that we should always try to imitate Christ in our dealings with others. This is particularly true when someone is potentially vulnerable or someone much or society would tend to ignore, forget or even fail to see. The gospel for today's mass shows Jesus noticing the widow's mite. The chances were that this woman went unnoticed by everybody else and her contribution counted for little in the eyes of most of those around her. But that was not the case with Jesus. He noticed her, he acknowledged her. He will do the same with Kathleen and I would like to think that our community can more accurately refer to itself as Christian and Christ-like because of the kindness and care which Kathleen Kenny received.

We gather this afternoon primarily to commend the gentle and pure soul of Kathleen Kenny to the God she loved and whom she knew loved her. I very deliberately suggested that first reading from the prophet Isaiah for Kathleen's funeral. Kathleen loved her food, and she had a great appetite. Again, living here in town allowed her access to a variety of food which she loved. Sadly, it was one of the first signs of her illness when her body could no longer tolerate very much food even those things she loved. That reading from Isaih presents an image of Heaven as a Banquet of Rich food to which we have been invited to partake in. So, I pray that Kathleen, now freed of all illness will once again the fullness of the heavenly banquet. As we say farewell to her today, we can say with St. Paul and Kathleen can certainly say.

The Time of my departure has come, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race and I have kept the Faith. Kathleen, you have and now may your gentle soul rest in peace AMEN