

Ann Vaughn (nee Delaney) RIP
Funeral Mass
Durrow Church
Thursday 7th September 2023

Peacefully at home surrounded by her loving family after a long illness borne with faith and courage. Predeceased by her father and mother Mick and May. Deeply regretted by her loving husband Sam, daughters Samantha and Aisling, son in law John Joe and Aisling's fiancé Justin, cherished grandmother of Conor, Óran and Darragh, brothers Jim and Dick and sister Stella Doyle (Wicklow), brothers in law, sisters in law, nephews, nieces, cousins, a large circle of friends and the wider community of Durrow

In the centre of Kilkenny city there is a little cemetery called St. Rioch's. In that cemetery there is a tombstone with the following inscription:

Dear Stranger,

Pause as you pass by,

As you are now, so once was I

As I am now, so once you shall be,

So prepare yourself to follow me!

A pithy little piece and somewhat sobering. But it serves to remind us that our life here on earth is perhaps best described in terms of a journey which we all undertake, a journey which, for people of Faith, has heaven as its ultimate destination, a journey where God is our companion and guide. It is a journey which has twists and turns, hills and valleys, rough roads and smooth ones too.

For Ann, that earthly journey began on Tuesday the 6th of November 1951 when she was born into the Delaney family of Finnan Ballyragget County Kilkenny. After her primary and secondary education, (a period of her life which I think she did not remember with any great affection) she began working at the local Post Office in Ballyragget. Later she would begin working at the recently opened Avonmore complex on the Durrow Road. Avonmore would provide Ann with much more than a job because it was there that she would meet a work colleague from Co. Offaly and he would become the love of her life. Ann and Sam were married on the 17th of August 1976. They came to live at their newly built home here in Durrow and here she would live for the rest of her life.

I think it is fair to say that Ann did not just come to live in Durrow. She became part of Durrow and Durrow became part of her. In recent times I have been hearing so much about Ann's contribution to the life of this community. Ann was a reader in this church. She was part of so many community based groups and organisations, school boards and Parents Councils. Ann was not just a member of these groups, she was an integral part of them, never shying away from those roles and jobs which so many might like to avoid. Ann was a worker and through her active presence at so many levels she made a unique contribution to the quality of life in this parish and the wider community. Today is an opportunity for us to acknowledge with gratitude that contribution and to celebrate Ann's kindness and generosity of her time and talent to Durrow.

For more than ten years Ann also worked as a carer in the wider community and one of the lovely tributes on RIP.ie came from a colleague who spoke of Ann's 'beautiful caring nature'. In the final months of her life Ann was to be at the receiving end of that very same love, care and kindness which she had given to so many over the years.

While Ann gave so much of her time to this community and to her profession as a carer, her primary vocation was always to be a wife to Sam and a mother to Samantha and Aisling. In more recent years she has rejoiced in being a grandmother to Conor, Óran and Darragh and I think

it was mutual, the three boys described their granny as being the kindest, the best and great in every way.

So many of the attributes of the valiant woman spoken of in that first reading from the Book of Proverbs found a very strong echo in the life of the woman we honour with Christian burial today. One line that I was reminded of as I listened to you her family speak about Ann yesterday was *'she willingly works with her hands, she works diligently, taking pride in her inner resources and strengths.'* I gather Ann found it hard to sit down. She always found jobs to do. That work ethic seems to have been there from an early age as I listened to Dick talk about how she would milk the cows by hand every morning before she went off to school. Perhaps it was no surprise then that the hobby she was most passionate about also involved her being on her feet and using her feet. I suggested earlier that Ann and Sam may have met in Avonmore. I think while they both worked there the first meeting was actually at a dance, They were both very good dancers and that partnership which began on the Ballyragget Macra Hall dancefloor remained in step and in harmony for almost fifty years.

I would like to leave you with two final thoughts today. I know that words and poetry are important in Ann's family. The first thought is really a prayer and I think's it's words are kind of appropriate for Ann today. It is simply called the Dancer's Prayer

The Dancer's Prayer

Giver of life, Creator of all that is lovely,
Teach me to sing the words of your song;
I want to feel the music of living
And not fear the sad songs,
But from them make new songs
Composed of both laughter and tears.

Teach me to dance to the sounds of your
world and your people,
I want to move in rhythm with your plan;

Help me to try to follow your leading,
To risk even falling,
To rise and keep trying
Because you are leading the dance

The second thought is contained in some lines taken from a poem I have had cause to reflect on a lot lately. It is John O' Donohue's beautiful poem; *'On the death of a Beloved'*

Though we cannot see you with outward eyes,
We know our soul's gaze is upon your face,
Smiling back at us from within everything
To which we bring our best refinement.

Let us not look for you only in memory,
Where we would grow lonely without you.
You would want us to find you in presence,
Beside us when beauty brightens,
When kindness glows
And music echoes eternal tones.

When orchids brighten the earth,
Darkest winter has turned to spring;
May this dark grief flower with hope
In every heart that loves you.

So Ann;

May you continue to inspire us:
To enter each day with a generous heart.
To serve the call of courage and love
Until we see your beautiful face again
In that land where there is no more separation,

Where all tears will be wiped from our mind,
And where we will never lose you again.

Ann. May your gentle soul rest in Peace

John O'Donohue