

Larry Dunne RIP
Funeral Mass
Rathdowney Church
Thursday 21st September 2023

*Larry Dunne, Knockiel, Rathdowney, Co. Laois, September 19th. 2023
peacefully surrounded by his family at the Midlands Regional Hospital
Portlaoise. Predeceased by his parents Lar and Nora. Deeply regretted by his
loving wife Mary, his adoring family Yvonne and Lorcan, daughters-in-law
Linda and Laura, grandchildren Lorcan, Willow and Teddy, brother Pat, sisters
Mary, Tess and Noreen, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews,
extended family, neighbours and a wide circle of friends.*

Throughout my years here in Rathdowney the word I have heard most used to describe Larry Dunne was “a Character” That’s a great Irish way of describing someone who for the most part we like a lot, even though at times they may irritate or annoy us, someone who is knowledgeable, passionate, a good sense of humour and opinionated about certain things. Someone who is part of the fabric of a community. Larry was certainly part of the fabric of this community in Rathdowney.

Larry was born not far from Rathdowney, at Kilcoke in the parish of Borris In Ossory on Sunday 3rd of July 1949. He was the middle child of five. After school in Killadooley and some time at the Tech here in Rathdowney Larry started to work in the Creamery in Donaghmore. There were many families in the area who had a representative on the workforce in Donaghmore, but few were as well represented as the Dunnes of Kilcoke. I think at one point there have been five members of the family in Donaghmore causing one local wit to rename the creamery as ‘Dunnes Stores’

Following Donaghmore Larry began delivering milk here locally. Then he became the Breadman, the shopkeeper and later, the publican. All of those roles would bring Larry into contact with so many people and deeper into the heart of the community. When he wasn't meeting people through work, he was meeting them in O'Malley's or up in the Golf Club. Trying to come up with a symbol to represent Larry's working life was not easy as there had been so many different jobs. Perhaps the one symbol which might best cover them all were his hands. And when those hands were not engaged in some form of work, they were swinging a hurl for Borris in Ossory and later Rathdowney. Larry won an U21 Championship and captained the Borris in Ossory team in 1968. Four years later he was part of the Borris in Ossory Senior team that won the Bob O 'Keefe cup. He also played Minor and under 21 hurling with Laois. He finished his hurling career in Rathdowney winning the Junior Championship. I also understand on one occasion he would be part of the same team as his son. Those hands could also swing golf clubs very successfully. (I was delighted to see the guard of honour from The Rathdowney Golf Club which accompanied Larry into the Church this afternoon). The Spirit of Larry Dunne will always live up there in the Golf Club. As one commentator wrote in recent days *Rathdowney Golf Club will be forever indebted to Larry for all the work he did for the golf Club. Driving machinery, coaching juveniles & ticket seller par excellence, Club Captain to name but a few, not forgetting he was also our first Club President.* I'm sure his contribution is well acknowledged by many of you here today.

This is something of a snapshot, an insight into the man we honour with Christian burial today. Going back to that one word most used to describe Larry, I think it is true to say that when someone is accorded the status of 'a character' there may well be aspects of their lives that they wish they had done differently or not at all. I'm sure Larry was no different. Perhaps we might all say the same at the end of our lives. But

today is a day for giving thanks and celebrating a life which has ended at a relatively young age.

As I said at the beginning, our main purpose here today is to commend Larry's soul to God.

Larry has died in these September early autumn days. Dead leaves are beginning to fall to the ground, but they are not alone. The seeds of new life are also falling. Having a certain familiarity with cereals like wheat and barley and what is made from them, Larry would have understood well when Jesus talked in today's gospel of the grain of wheat falling on the ground, the seed being sown in the soil. The mystery of nature is that the wheat grain, the seed must first actually die in the ground before the new life comes from it. That mystery of nature provides the basis for our Christian understanding of death and resurrection. Dying is part of living and a step along the road of on-going life. We are here today because it is Larry's time to die. In the early autumn of his life too, he released her spirit to God; was received by his welcoming love and made ready for a new spring in God's life-filled presence forever.

Larry, May your soul rest in Peace