

Lucy Scillitoe RIP
Memorial Service
Canongate Church Edinburgh
Tuesday 22nd February 2022

Gospel Reading

Jesus said to his disciples

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

About ten years ago there was a popular television series in Ireland called *Living with Lucy*. I only mention that title because since I became aware that Lucy wished me to speak at this Service to celebrate her life, I have tried to seek out the views and thoughts and memories of so many who did know what it was like not only to Live with Lucy but to Laugh with Lucy, to Love with Lucy, to work with Lucy. Sadly, for me, I only came to know Lucy in the last few years of her life, but I deeply appreciated the connection we had. It is not unusual for people to approach the likes of Neil and myself to ask us to pray for some intention in their lives. I suppose it is natural for us to be viewed as professionals when it comes to praying. Anyway, I don't know about you Neil, but I think I have more failures than successes when it comes to praying for other people's intentions and in Lucy's case, I suspect she

viewed me as a spectacular failure. I say this because every time we met, she had one thing to ask me to pray for and that was for her to meet the man of her dreams. Well Lucy, from wherever you are tuning in to us today I apologise for this major shortcoming on my part. However, despite my spiritual inadequacies in the match-making department, Lucy has in the last year of her life regularly tuned into the Sunday celebration from my parish church in Ireland and I know that deepened the bond between us. It also Lucy to express her Christian Faith and I can only hope that it created a space for her to come closer to God at the most difficult time in her life.

Despite the sadness and heartbreak that everyone feels in this church today and have felt since Lucy's death on the 2nd of December last year, we are here today to celebrate the life of a uniquely gifted and beautiful woman.

Sally very kindly sent me three insightful documents to help me prepare for today. There were the tributes to Lucy on the **VisitScotland Business Events LinkedIn page**, **the hundreds of messages on Lucy's own Facebook page** and **the most recently updated copy of Lucy's CV**

As I reflected on those pages, those words, those tributes, and insights, three aspects emerged for me of the woman whose life we celebrate today.

Firstly, in both her professional and personal life Lucy lived by the highest standards, (There may have been some question of untidiness!!) she held others to the highest standards and consequently she was a wonderful ambassador for the hospitality industry in Scotland and beyond.

Secondly, repeatedly it was mentioned how much of an inspiration Lucy was to others. One tribute said: *Like many others Lucy started out as my boss but became so much more over the years. I owe my career to this lady who coached me in both my career and private life. She really championed talent.*

And gave up her time to help those learning the trade.

Thirdly, through out so many of the tributes on both the LinkedIn and Facebook pages the word that kept coming up again and again to describe Lucy was some reference to LIGHT.let me read some of them.....

Lucy with that smile that **lit** up a room

Lucy touched many hearts with her **warmth** and genuine joy and fun.

Scotland has lost a **shining** star.

Lucy was always a **shining light** in any setting and just one of the good people on this earth.

Lucy was such a **light** in our industry

Lucy was a **real light in our industry** over the years.

Lucy was such a **shining vibrant happy fun person.**

Lucy lit up a room she was such a wonderful charismatic and inspirational person.

Beautiful Lucy, you were a shining light in so many people's lives, including mine...

That was why I chose the gospel reading from St. Matthew chapter 15 where Jesus encourages his followers to be both salt and Light.

Interestingly and perhaps obviously 'Salt' is a symbol of the hospitality industry. One article I read about the symbolism of salt said that *Because of its characteristic qualities and usage in pre-medieval life and customs, salt has for centuries been a symbol of taste, purity, preservation, fidelity, luxury, and welcome.*

Lucy Scillitoe was also a symbol of taste, purity, preservation, fidelity, luxury and welcome.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others,

So perhaps it was no coincidence that when a youngest sibling for Simon, Robin and Emma was born to John and Moira Scillitoe of Earls Colne in Essex on the 17th of January 1968, they named her Lucy. The name Lucy literally means Light or the bringer of Light. One interesting thing I came across was a description of the character of one named

Lucy: You always bring to completion anything you start. You are generous but like to see returns from your giving. You have an executive ability, you are a leader. You are moral, balanced, honest and intellectual, and you may attain spirituality. You are wise and practical with an appreciation of beauty. You always think before you act. Emergencies may raise your intuitive abilities in order to resolve conflict or situation. You become very creative under the pressure and have quite original ideas to make the best out of it.

You are very intuitive..... Operating on the spiritual side of your individuality can bring you to the great heights and drop you off if you neglect your spiritual identity. (You are always looking for an opportunity to investigate the unknown, to use and show your mental abilities, to find the purpose and meaning of life. You want to grow wise and to understand people and things. You need privacy to replenish your energy. You have a unique way of thinking, intuitive, reflective, absorbing.)

Having listened to those who knew her much longer and better than I did and having read the many tributes I think Lucy more than lived up to her name as the Bringer of Light, the bringer of warmth and JOY.

I am reminded today of an event I was at some years ago attended by former president of Ireland, Mary McAleese. The president gave a short address and in it she said that in her experience of life there were two types of people in the world: Radiators and Drains. Now we all have experienced the drains in our lives, those people who literally DRAIN us of every bit of energy because of their negativity and pessimism. We are very fortunate though if we also know the radiators, those people who radiate love and warmth. The picture on the front of our Order of Service today testifies that Lucy was the quintessential Radiator and we are all the better because something of her Light has radiated in our direction.

I have three final reflections for you today.

Firstly, at the end of Lucy's CV there is a section titled; 'Some Career and Personal Highlights'. After listing some pretty impressive achievements in the hospitality industry in both Scotland and The United States Lucy name four personal highlights: Completing a 10k race in hilly Edinburgh, skydiving over the Perthshire Hills, a third one which I hope

some explains to me afterwards in Monteiths "Spending three nights in a maximum-security prison in Louisiana".

The last personal highlight mentioned by Lucy was a visit to The Valley of the Kings in Egypt. I have never been to The Valley of the Kings, but I have some knowledge of what it is. The Valley is the burial place of the kings and royal leaders of ancient Egypt. Each tomb is richly decorated, and the theme of each decoration is connected to the journey of the sun god through the darkness of night guiding the deceased from the darkness of death into the dawn and Light of a new day and a new life. When Christianity came along it borrowed that same imagery from the ancient peoples. For the Christian the vowel in SUN God changes from a 'u' to an 'o' and so we believe that it is Jesus the SON of God who guides us through the darkness of death into a new life. That is the faith Lucy professed and celebrated here in this church in Canongate over many years. It is in the context of that Faith that we gather here today to in some way accompany our beloved Lucy on her final journey into the eternal LIGHT of Heaven.

My second reflection is more in the form of a direct question to all of us here today. After the pain and sadness have eased what if anything are we going to do about the death of our friend?

A story which some of you may know suggests an answer to my question.! The story is about Puccini, the great Italian writer of such classic operas as Madame Butterfly and La Boheme. It seems that like Lucy, when Puccini was fairly young when he contracted cancer, and so he decided to spend his last days writing his final opera, Turandot, which is one of his most polished pieces. When his friends and disciples would say to him, "You are ailing, take it easy and rest" he would always respond; "I'm going to do as much as I can on my great masterpiece and it's up to you, my friends, to finish it if I don't." Well, Puccini died before the opera was completed. Now his friends had a choice. They could forever mourn their friend and return to life as usual- or they could build on his melody and complete what he started. They chose the latter. And so in 1926, at the famous La Scala Opera House in Milan, Italy, Puccini's opera was played for the first time, conducted by the famed Italian conductor, Arturo Toscanini. And when it came to part

in the opera where the master had stopped because he died, Toscanini stopped everything, turned around with eyes welling up with tears, and said to the large audience, "This is where the master ends" And he wept. But then after a few moments, he lifted his head, smiled broadly, and said;" And this is where his friends began". And he finished the opera.

You see the point of the question I posed. What are we going to do about Lucy's death? What are we going to do with her unfinished masterpiece? For Simon, **Robin and Emma and their families, for her dear friends like Sally and Majella**, life can never be the same again. But for those of you who worked with Lucy, walked with her or shared life's adventures with her, will it be for us, in a month or so, life as usual? Or can we build on her sincerity, her loyalty, her compassion her capacity to bring Light and Joy? I would suggest that there is a fitting response to the sadness we all feel today at Lucy's death; it is life, our life, a life that is lived better, a life lived more selflessly and compassionately, a life that makes a difference, a life that brings the highest standards to whatever we do professionally and personally, a life where we try to be a little more the radiator and a little less the drain, whether it is as a parent, a partner, a spouse, an employee, a friend. Across the chasm of death, we can make Lucy live. The music doesn't have to stop here today, it doesn't have to be scattered or buried with Lucy. The choice is ours.

Finally, I'm very conscious that this beautiful church we gather in today has many royal connections. When Queen Elizabeth, the Queen mother died twenty years ago on the 30th of March 2002, there was particular sadness in Scotland. She was of course a native of Scotland and I'm sure she worshipped here in this church many times. I mention the Queen Mother today because at the time of her funeral a number of beautiful poems were published which captured how so many were feeling that at that time. As we gather to say farewell to Lucy today, I think the words of one of those poems speak to how we all feel at this time and these words could well be Lucy's as she leaves us today:

It was beautiful as long as it lasted, the journey of my life, I have no regrets whatsoever, save the pain I'll leave behind.

*Those dear hearts who love and care, and the heavy with sleep ever moist eyes,
the smile in spite of a lump in the throat and the strings pulling at the heart and
soul,*

*The strong arms that held me up when my own strength let me down, each
morsel that I was fed with was full of love.*

*At every turning of my life I came across good friends and family who stood by
me, even when the time raced me by.*

Farewell, farewell my friends, I smile and bid you goodbye.

*No, shed no tears, for I need them not, all I need is your smile, If you feel sad, do
think of me, for that's what I'll like, when you live in the hearts of those you
love, remember then..... you never die*

***when you live in the hearts of those you love, remember then..... you
never die. I suspect that in the hearts of many here today Lucy will
never die. May she rest in peace***

Gospel Passage

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.