

Mary O'Regan RIP
Funeral Mass
Saturday 14th January 2023

Mary O'Regan (nee Monaghan), The Corner House, Errill, Co. Laois. January 11th, 2023. Peacefully at home, sadly missed by her brothers Jack and Michael, sisters-in-law Judith and Brenda, her sisters Kathleen and Bernadette, brothers-in-law Richard and John, her nieces and nephews, especially Gerry and Gerardine, grand-nephews, grand-nieces, relatives, neighbours and friends.

According to website for the London Underground train system the distance from Highgate to St. Paul's Cathedral is roughly about five miles and takes 37 minutes on the train. Before she married Pat O'Regan Mary Monaghan lived in Highgate for a number of years. I'm not sure if Mary ever made that relatively short journey from Highgate to St. Paul's but if she did, she would have been able to view one of the most famous paintings in the world. It is a painting by William Holman Hunt and it depicts Jesus carrying a lantern and he is standing at a door knocking. Very significantly, there is no handle on his side of the door, therefore he has to wait for the person on the other side to open the door. In these January days Jesus has knocked gently on Mary's door and with one last movement of her hand she opened that door so that Jesus could welcome her to paradise. It is a knock that Mary has been expecting for a few months since she was given that terminal prognosis by her medical team. Typical of Mary, she calmly accepted that news but took some time to herself to get used to the reality of what lay ahead before she would share the news with those she wanted to know. A few weeks before Christmas, Mary shared her news with me, and she asked me to celebrate the Last Sacraments with her. It is a very sobering, a very sacred and a very privileged moment to celebrate the sacrament with someone who not only knows they are dying but also someone who accepts that calmly and with deep faith. What helped Mary to accept her death was the reality that her death would allow her to be reunited with

her beloved Pat. On my way to Donegal the week after Christmas I stopped at Pat's grave in Kiltoombe and part of my prayer there was to say to Pat that he needed to prepare a place to welcome the love of his life because according to herself, she would soon be joining him.

Many of you know the story of how Mary, having grown up in Longford, Emo County Laois and then back in Kiltoombe, Co. Roscommon, followed the path of many young Irish people to seek a new life in England. As mentioned earlier, Mary settled in Highgate in North London. After some time in London Mary was invited to a friend's wedding in a town in the English Midlands called Leamington Spa. It was a journey and a wedding which would change her life. At that wedding Mary would meet a fellow guest, a young West Corkman named Pat O Reagan. Pat was obviously very smitten because in the months after the wedding and that first meeting, he regularly made the journey from the midlands to London to woo and win the love of his life. There is some evidence that Mary did not exactly make it easy for him and by Mary's own admission, her local priest in Highgate intervened and strongly encouraged her to do right by this very committed Corkman. The clerical intervention worked, and they were married in Highgate on the 21st March 1968. When Pat passed away in March 2020, they had completed 52 years of marriage, love and commitment to each other.

After their marriage, Pat and Mary settled in Harrow in London but just a few years later decided to move back to Ireland. This was so that Mary could care for her mother Lena, who was not well. They lived in Artane in Dublin and later after Lena died, Mary and Pat settled in Allenwood Co. Kildare. Pat was now working as an auctioneer with a particular interest in antique furniture and collectables. Following the death of Mary's dad, Pat and Mary decided to relocate to Pat's native West Cork in 1980. They were to spend the next 18 years in Cork while Pat continued the auctioneering. In retirement they set out on one last journey. The priority was to find a small community which reflected their interests and values, a place where they could belong. And so, in

1998 Pat and Mary found themselves living at the Corner House here in Errill village in the heart of the Irish midlands. The years spent living in Errill have I think been happy ones where Mary and Pat made many friends.

In the gospel today, Jesus speaks beautifully about going to the Father's house to prepare a place for his faithful disciples. Throughout their long marriage Pat made it his priority to care for Mary and to always prepare a place of comfort and love for her, a place they would call home. In the months before Pat died, the roles were somewhat reversed as Mary took such wonderful care of Pat. Today, with the Lord's help, Pat will now resume the role he dedicated himself to on that March Day in Highgate Church fifty-five years ago. I have no doubt that Pat will have prepared a new home to welcome Mary in heaven.

Mary, may you enjoy the homecoming and the reunion with Pat and all your Monaghan loved ones who have gone ahead of you. Most of all, may you enjoy the meeting with your God face to face, a meeting which will last for eternity. AMEN