

Nicky Meagher RIP
Funeral Mass
Rathdowney
Thursday 23rd August 2023

Nicholas (Nicky) Meagher, Ballybuggy, Rathdowney, Co. Laois. 20th August 2023. The untimely death has occurred of Nicholas (Nicky) Meagher at Tullamore Hospital, surrounded by his loving wife Susan, son Nicholas and his family. Nicholas is predeceased by his loving mother Marion and dear sister Anne. Sadly missed by his heartbroken wife Susan, son Nicholas, father Nicholas, dear sisters Felicity and Jane, brothers Graham, Dougie and Greg, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, extended family, neighbours and friends.

I'm very conscious that it's just less than four months since all of you in the Meagher family sat in these front seats at Marion's funeral. Since then, Nicky has spent much of these summer months not only coming to terms with the loss of his beloved mother but also dealing with his own illness. That word '*untimely*' used to describe Nicky's death in Rip.ie hints at, but also seems totally inadequate to describe the trauma, sadness and pain caused by this loss of a much beloved, husband, father, Son, brother, uncle, neighbour, mentor and friend.

As I mentioned at the beginning of Mass our main purpose here today is to pray for Nicky and to commend him to the love and mercy of God. But this funeral Mass also allows us the opportunity to acknowledge, celebrate and give thanks for a life lived to the full. To help us do that I'd like to share the words of a familiar poem. It is simply called the dash.

The Dash

by Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak
at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on the leaflet
from the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth
and spoke of the following date with tears,
but he said what mattered most of all
was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time
that they spent alive on earth.
And now only those who loved them
know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own,
the cars...the house...the cash.
What matters is how we live and love
and how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard.
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left
that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
to consider what's true and real
and always try to understand
the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger
and show appreciation more
and love the people in our lives
like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect
and more often wear a smile,
remembering that this special dash
might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read,
with your life's actions to rehash...
would you be proud of the things they say
about how you spent YOUR dash?

The two dates which may in time appear on Nicky's tombstone are the
12th of May 1961 and the 20th of August 2023

In between those two dates is a little dash which for Nicky represents
just over sixty two years of life.

*"What matters is how we live and love
and how we spend our dash."*

Well, how did Nicky Meagher spend his dash? Those of you who knew
him for many years could answer that question very well. In recent days
I have gained some little insight into the man whom we honour with
Christian burial today.

Apart from a few short but very significant years spent living and
working in England Rathdowney has been the place Nicky called home
all of his life.

Following in the family tradition he was gifted with his hands but
plastering became his profession and trade of choice. Those hands that
corrected many a crack and blemish, that allowed rough and uneven
surfaces to become smooth were also the hands that loved to hold a
fishing rod or a set of darts. They were the hands too that like his mam
loved to be out in his garden cultivating the soil and sowing vegetables.

But Nicky's hands were also helping hands and I believe he was the go-to man for all kinds of jobs and tasks in his extended family and beyond.

I mentioned those short but significant years spent in England. They were significant because it was of course that was where he met you Sue. You were I think working with Nicky's aunt in the same London pub. He and his friends came to visit his aunt and of course have a drink. However, he eventually left with far more than he could have hoped for. Sometime after your marriage ye returned here to Rathdowney, built a beautiful home, raised your son Nicholas and lived your lives in the shelter of family and friends. Many of those pastimes which Nicky enjoyed, be it fishing darts or days out touring Ireland were all the more enjoyable because ye did them together.

I can't speak with any knowledge of Nick's relationship with his God but I chanced picking that gospel today with Nicky in mind. I think he might have more than a passing interest in the scene described there.

The apostles were despondent after the events of Good Friday, and they had gone back fishing. They caught nothing but then Jesus appears and even though they don't immediately recognise him they trust him when he invites them to launch out their nets again. I'm sure there were times in Nicky's life when challenges and crises came his way and not just in the fishing sense of the term; "He had caught nothing". In those times whether he knew it or was aware of it I hope God was there in his life.

Incidentally I was just thinking the other day that Nicky will have something of an advantage over a lot of us as He knocks on heaven's door. You know how when you meet someone for the first time, and you wonder what you might talk about. Well, it is a plus if you know something about the other person's interests or what work they do. Well, there is Nicky Meagher, the fisherman meeting up with St. Peter who before he took up the job of key holder and bouncer at the Pearly gates was also a fisherman. When they get on to the subject of Fishing and if they don't try to outdo each other with their knowledge of the subject

Nicky should be well in. That of course will also help when Peter introduces Nicky to Jesus himself. When it came to choosing his closest collaborators the first people Jesus picked were all Fishermen. So, I suspect they will get on well together.

As a final thought today, reading through the various messages of condolence on RIP.ie I realise there were a lot of people who liked and admired Nicky as a work colleague, friend and neighbour. Sue particularly wanted me to acknowledge Paddy Murphy. Paddy, Nicky was your mentor and friend for many years. To all of you and most especially to you Sue and Nicholas, to Nicky senior to Felicity and Jane, Graham, Dougie and Greg our sympathies go out to you today. I leave you with the words of the final verse of that beautiful Tommy Fleming song which Martin will sing at the end of Mass today.

Goodbye my old friend. I have to let you go now. You were the gentle breeze, That lied upon my way. I know you wont be far. You're that angel on my shoulder. So goodbye my old friend. We'll meet again someday. Goodbye my old friend. We'll meet again someday.

Nicky, May your gentle soul rest in Peace Amen