

**Pat Gill RIP**  
**Funeral Mass**  
**Rathdowney Church**  
**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

*Patrick (Pat) Gill, Harp Road, Rathdowney, Co. Laois, formerly Deans Grange/Whitechurch Hill, Ballyboden, Dublin 16, September 14<sup>th</sup>. 2023, peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family. Predeceased by his son David, his parents May and Andy, his sister Margaret, his brothers-in-law Peter and Franko and his nephew Deano. Deeply regretted by his loving wife Pauline, adoring children Andrew, Padraig, Sinead, Lorna and Martin, daughter-in-law Samantha, Martin's partner Amy, grandchildren Ciarán, Oisín, Diarmuid and Aideen, sisters Catherine, Ann and Dolores, brother John, sister-in-law Cathy, brothers-in-law, Seán, Matt, Noel and Mike, uncle Henry, aunts Pat and Dolores, nieces, nephews, extended family, relatives, neighbours and a wide circle of friends.*

As we gather here today to celebrate the life of a man who was uniquely gifted with his hands I'm reminded again of the story about a young lad who was on his way to school. He was passing a wood carver's workshop and he looked in and saw a huge trunk of a tree which the woodcarver was ready to begin work on. The young lad had to keep going, and for weeks after that the front doors of the workshop were closed as he passed by, even though he could hear the wood carver chipping away at work inside. Then one day as he was passing, the front doors were open again; the boy looked in and to his amazement, where the tree trunk had been was a figure of a magnificent tiger. The young lad walked right up to the wood carver, tugged at his coat and asked: Excuse me sir but how did you know there was a tiger in there?

As we begin our life's journey, we are all given something like that tree trunk out of which we are invited to craft our life. God gives us certain resources and tools to work with. Each of us will create something

uniquely different and with varying degrees of success. Along the way we are helped and assisted by various people who come into our lives. In some way they all have their influence on us and on the shape of the life which we craft and create.

The man that we honour with Christian burial today took that tree of life which God gave to him, he used the tools and talents he was given and with the help of others, particularly his wife Pauline, he went on to craft a very full and rewarding life which lasted for sixty years.

Now Pauline, before I go any further, I want to apologise to you as I know you will be very upset with me and maybe even disgusted with me because you are not used to this but over the last while and particularly in the last few days and after I had listened to you, Padraig and Sinead speak about him yesterday I realised that so much of Pat's life could be summed up in a series of 'F' words. Before you take me to task for my language let me say what those ten 'F' words which are so much of Pat's story are *Father, Family, Faithful, St. Fintan's Fixer, Fitter, Food, Foster, Friend, Fun*. I will try to touch on as many of those words as I can and maybe a few more as we give thanks to God for this man that we honour with Christian burial today.

Pat Gill was born on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 1963, the youngest of six born to May and Andy Gill of 33 St. Fintan's park in Dean's Grange in Dublin. The family he was born into and the family he would later go on to create with Pauline were the two great anchors of his life and I believe he was Faithful to both all of his life.

Pat's early experience of work came at a very young age when he helped his father to deliver milk before heading to school in the morning. Then there was the paper rounds which he later turned into a family business. That work ethic developed at such an early age was something that characterised and defined Pat all of his life. Last Sunday morning I had the privilege of celebrating the Sacrament of the Sick with Pat and as I anointed his hands I thought of how gifted and creative those hands had

been. As a very young man Pat had served his time as a panel beater and he would go on to create a very successful business using that skill. This perhaps was the first evidence of Pat the Fixer.

One evening when he was only 19 he went as he regularly did with his friends to listen to music and have a few drinks at the Wexford Inn on Camden Street in Dublin City Centre. However, this particular evening would change his life in ways he could never have imagined. He would meet a demure quiet young woman from beyond the pale now working in Dublin. I understand the first encounter was not very promising and it began with an approach from the young Rathdowney woman with a line I'm not sure I can fully quote in church. It was something like 'give me your hand you dry bleep bleep'. Well, I suppose he knew exactly what to expect from the beginning and the rest as they say is history. Pat and Pauline were married here in this church on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1985. But while he was happy to travel here for a wedding Pat the committed Dub had no intentions of ever moving down here to live. Pauline, from observing ye over the years and from everything you have told me, you and Pat had a great partnership and a great marriage. Ye worked as a team. Ye have known the Joyful, Glorious and sadly also the Sorrowful mysteries of Family life. As you stood here before the altar on that April day in 1985 one of the questions Fr. Campion asked you was; '*Are you willing to accept with love the children God may send you ?*' You both answered yes to that question but standing here that day you could not have known what implications that question and your answer would have in your lives. Precious children would come into your lives through different routes. Some would be with you for a very short time and some would go on to complete your family sitting with you in these front seats today. The important thing is that Pat and you were open and generous enough to share your love in this unique way. In more recent times the glorious mysteries of your family life would arrive in the form of *Ciarán, Oisín, Diarmuid and Aideen,*

Pat and Pauline would spend the first twenty-one years of their married and family life in Dublin but then due to various circumstances Pat began to rethink his earlier strongly held conviction that he could never live outside the city. Most of the family relocated here to Rathdowney and perhaps to his own surprise Pat grew to love Rathdowney and this became home. It was home not just in terms of a house and his family. Pat made many friends here. Those creative and gifted hands of his have left their mark on so many homes in this community and beyond, my own included. Pat the Fitter; be it kitchens or tiles or shelves here in the windows of this church, he did it with taste and perfection. Working as a driver for Tesco, caring for grandchildren, designing and creating homes for Sinead and Padraig and Sam and their family, cooking family meals rolling his own cigarettes, those creative hands were never idle.

This is a little snapshot and a little insight into the man whose life we celebrate today. For you Pauline, he was your soulmate, for his children and grandchildren he was an idol, a best friend. All of that makes these days so sad and so painful for all of you occupying the front seats of our church today. As a community we extend our heartfelt sorrow and sympathy to you.

While Pat may not have regularly frequent these benches, I know that he lived a very faith filled life. His was a life lived by some very strong principles, like hard work, generosity, love, compassion, loyalty, putting others before himself. Pat died on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, a rather unusual feast day in the church. It is known as the Feast of the exultation or the triumph of the Cross. It seems a bit of a contradiction to be talking about the pain and the suffering of Jesus on the cross and yet to be talking of that as some kind of triumph . But that is what we believe it was. Jesus' death on the cross somehow paved the way for all of us to have a better future with God in heaven.

Pat Gill, long before his death on Thursday or even long before his illness over the last few months, knew something of the pain and the sorrow of the cross. Back in the 80's and 90's Pat lost some very significant people in his life. Just before he became a dad himself for the first time, Pat lost his own father in November 1984. In 1986 his best friend 'redser' died as a very young man. But it was in January 1996 that Pat would experience his greatest sense of loss with the death of your baby son David.

We all cope differently with grief and loss. Men in particular can find it very difficult to express what they are feeling inside. One of Pat's ways of coping with the loss of David was to write a little poem and I will finish with it today. It is simply called *My Son*

*I suffer in silence; I cry alone, with every tear I wish you would come home. And in the morning lie waiting for me, to see your little face, your big smiley eyes. But you are gone to your Father, the one in heaven, he will keep you and care for you and love you as I do until I come to you and hold you in my arms and then once again, we will be father and son.*

I'm sure that reunion has already taken place so Pat may your generous, gentle soul rest in Peace.