

Kathleen Hassett RIP
Funeral Mass
Errill Church
Thursday 5th of January 2024

*Kathleen Hassett (nee Meehan), Lisduff, Errill, Co. Laois, January 1st. 2024,
peacefully at home surrounded by her loving family in her 100th year.
Predeceased by her husband Paddy, her parents Michael and Mary and brother
Denis. Sadly missed by her adoring family, Michael, Tom, Marian (Shanahan),
Denis, Breeda (Harty), Pat-Joe and Seamus, sons-in-law Liam and Pat,
daughters-in-law Mary-Ann, Ann, Julie, Linda and Jacqui, her 17
grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, extended family, her dear
neighbours and a wide circle of friends.*

A. Presentation of items that symbolizes Kathleen's Life:

John Paul will introduce the presenters and explain their symbolism

1. Denis – Photograph
2. Erin – Rosary beads
3. Liam Shanahan – Wooden Spoon
4. Aoife - Flowers
5. Marie – Spoons
6. Kathryn Tea Pot

B. Liturgy of the word:

First Reading – OT No. 3 (Isaiah 25:6-9) – Michael Hassett

Responsorial Psalm –No.1 (The Lord is my Shepherd) – Ann Hassett

Second Reading - NT No. (1 John3:1-3) – Breeda Harty

**C. Prayers of the faithful: 1. Michelle 2. Aine 3. Eileen 4. Eimear 5.
Liam**

6. Colin 7. Erin

(Presentation of Gifts - Bread & Wine) 1. Marian 2. Pat-Joe (PJ)

E. Communion Reflection 1. **Tom Hassett**

F. Eulogy and Thanks 1. **Michael Hassett**

To be honest, like many of you, especially all of you here in the front rows today, I had been looking forward to a very different type of celebration for Kathleen early in 2024. On the 13th of March Kathleen would have reached her 100th birthday. Instead we are gathered here in Errill this morning to say farewell to Kathleen because somehow God has decided that he wishes for her to be with him in heaven and that the special birthday will be celebrated with Paddy with her brother Denis and so many other family and friends who have gone ahead of her. Yes, we are very sad to be letting go of this wonderful mother, grandmother great grandmother friend , neighbour and fellow parishioner who has lived in this community all of her almost 100 years of life.

The main purpose of this funeral mass is to commend Kathleen's soul to God and to ask God to grant her one of the rooms in the Father's house. This funeral mass also allows us, and as you have been doing over the last few days to gather to sympathise with and support a family whose lives have been so formed, influenced and touched by this beautiful lady whom we honour with Christian burial today.

Thirdly the funeral mass allows us to celebrate and give thanks for Kathleen's wonderful life.

Among the symbols of Kathleen's life that were presented at the beginning of mass today were a wooden spoon and a teapot. Symbols always point to something much deeper than the items themselves. In Kathleen's case the wooden spoon and the teapot represent her gift as a cook, a baker, a homemaker and one who loved to offer hospitality to all who came to her door.

One of the many wonderful culinary smells that came from Lisduff over the years was that of freshly baked bread. Bread is a simple yet very powerful symbol of nourishment of love of hospitality and welcome. It is a symbol of intimacy of family and the ties of friendship. Because of that powerful symbolism of bread Jesus used it to express his closeness to us in the Eucharist.

In the gospel story of Emmaus, we saw that it was when Jesus broke the bread with his two friends it was then that he was really present to them and it was then that they recognised him.

In many ways what happened on that road to Emmaus is what brought me out the road to Lisduff every First Thursday for the last ten years. There was always a big smile, a warmth and a welcome, we exchanged stories, there was lots of laughter. Kathleen would enquire for people in the parish that she knew were sick. She would tell me of her family. There might be some good news of sporting or other achievement or a request for me to pray for someone or something she was worried about. The whole encounter would end with the breaking of bread the celebration of Eucharist. And then we knew that Christ was present. I will always remember those visits with Kathleen as being very sacred and very special

In every celebration of the Eucharist bread is taken, blessed, broken and given. In all of our lives that very same four step movement happens. We are taken, blessed, broken and given. At Mass the priest takes the bread in his hands and blesses it during the Eucharistic Prayer; then he breaks it and it is given to us as The Body of Christ.

Through our birth and baptism we, each one of us, is taken into God's hands; as the bread is taken so are we.

In life we are blessed by family, friends, love and joy; As the bread is blessed, so too are we.

We are broken by failure, loss, pain and heartbreak; As the bread is broken, so too are we.

In death, after a life of giving, we are given back to the mystery from which we came; As bread is given, so too are we.

Central I believe to Kathleen's simple but rock-like faith was that belief that when we take, bless, break and give bread to one another at Mass, The Lord is especially present in our midst. Perhaps at times unconsciously, she knew that what happens to the bread at Mass also happened to her in her own life.

For that reason I would like to use that image of the bread, taken, blessed, broken and given as way of reflecting little more on Kathleen's life today.

As bread is taken so too was Kathleen taken into this world on Thursday the 13th of March 1924 just down the road in Lisduff. She walked three miles to Clonmore school every morning and three miles back in the evening. When she left school in Clonmore she helped her father Michael on the family farm. From her mam Mary she learned the skills to be the wonderful homemaker she became.

As bread is blessed so are we and so was Kathleen. In many exchanges with Kathleen over the years she often spoke with gratitude about how richly blessed she had been in her life. She was blessed in the Meehan family she had been born into. She also spoke of her marriage to Paddy Hasset as one of the great blessings of her life. I'm not sure however she initially recognised Paddy as a blessing! It seems that somewhere around October or November 1947 Kathleen was introduced to Paddy Hasset from Gortnagarra Tomevara Co Tipperary. According to my sources a match was made. But Kathleen had some doubts. It seems that Paddy was coming to Lisduff on one Sunday to 'finalise the arrangements' and when Kathleen got wind of his impending arrival she absconded. Rumour has it that even met on the road. In the modern day parlance of Tinder it could be said that Kathleen definitely swiped left. I realise that some of ye won't know what that means and rest of ye will be shocked that I do!!

Anyway. Whatever happened in those weeks around Christmas 1947 Paddy must have worked his charm and Kathleen had a change of heart. The wedding took place on the 14th of January 1948 in the old church in Rathdowney. Not unusual in those days the wedding took place at 8 o'clock in the morning. Having recently celebrated Mass at 8 am on that very same site I wondered what it must have been like for Paddy and Kathleen and their guests to have a wedding before daylight appeared. Well anyway the wedding that began in darkness soon dawned into a marriage characterised by faith love, friendship, loyalty and commitment that lasted for more than 54 years until Paddy died in 2002. If her marriage to Paddy was a blessing in her life she also very blessed by the family they created together In more recent years those blessings have multiplied with the arrival of grandchildren and great grandchildren.

I'm sure there were many other ways in which Kathleen felt blessed in her life. She certainly was blessed with creativity and a wonderful pair of hands that were as productive outside in her garden as they were inside in the kitchen. And I also believe Kathleen felt very blessed in her strong Catholic Christian faith which hugely influenced her outlook on life and which sustained her in good times but even more importantly when the challenges and storms of life found their way to her door.

Yes as the bread is blessed so was Kathleen was richly blessed and we give thanks today for those many blessings.

As bread is broken so are we and so was Kathleen. None of us escapes the brokenness that life can bring and that brokenness can come in many different forms.

For Kathleen brokenness and pain came into her life at a very early age. She missed one whole year of school having badly damaged her hip while playing and sliding on ice. But without a doubt the worst brokenness and loss of her childhood was at the age of 8 when her 13 year old brother Denis the only son of her parents died from TB. In more recent times Kathleen had to deal with the brokenness of her own declining health I was always struck by how she accepted each stage of her decreased mobility but also by her gratitude for the smallest act of care and kindness she received from both her family and the many wonderful carers who made it possible for her to remain at home in Lisduff. As bread is broken so are we and so was Kathleen

As bread is shared and given so are we and so was Kathleen. Today we give your mother, your grandmother, your great grandmother, our neighbour and friend back to the mystery from which she came. This final giving back has been preceded and prepared for by many countless acts of giving and sharing which Kathleen has done in this community, in your immediate and extended family and in the countless individuals

whose lives she has touched in one way or another through her almost one hundred years .

As I have already mentioned When Kathleen finished in Primary school she stayed home to help her father on the farm. That was a role that her brother Denis would have taken on but Kathleen very willingly took his place. That generosity of spirit continued throughout her life not just within her own family but also within this parish community. Kathleen was very involved with the local ICA here in Errill for many years For someone who geographically lived at the edge of our parish and no doubt always had more than a passing interest in what was happening on the Tipperary side of the border the commitment of Kathleen and Paddy and their family to this parish community and particularly to Errill has been enormous at so many levels. It has been evident in parish life and liturgy, education on stage and on the sporting fields. Among my earliest childhood memories are those of being brought from Camross here to Errill to attend Scor competitions below in the hall Then rivalry was as fierce on stage as it was on hurling fields. The Hassett name somehow always figured significantly in those exchanges and lingered in my memory.

And so it is. At every celebration of the Eucharist that Kathleen participated in here in this church or in her own home, Bread was taken, Blessed, Broken and Given. Every time that happened the Lord was present to her in a unique way. In her own life too she has been taken blessed broken and given and because of the way she has lived that life The Lord has also been present a little more in this world. Just before Christmas , I visited Kathleen at home in Lisduff. While I realised there was a significant change from my previous visit she was completely alert as we prayed the prayer of anointing and the Last Sacraments with her. Later that day she received the Eucharist for the last time. This spiritual food which had sustained and nourished her faith all her life was now food for her final journey. With the last little bit of energy she had she lifted her hand to bless herself, in the name of the Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit, The Holy Trinity.

Almost a hundred years ago baby Kathleen Meehan was brought, two days after she was born, from Lisduff to Grogan church to be baptised at that very font over there. She was blessed with Holy water in the name of the same Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. How many times since in those almost 100 years has Kathleen raised that hand in blessing.. So Kathleen, In the name of God the Father who created you, in the name of God the son who suffered and died for you and in the name of God the Holy Spirit who empowered and strengthened you in Faith, We send you on your final journey to heaven today. I'm sure they have already begun preparing that banquet of rich food talked about by Isaiah and no doubt one of those many rooms in the father's house is also in readiness.

Kathleen, may your gentle soul rest in peace Amen

a very beautiful poem by Edgar Albert Guest. This is a poem that expresses the wish of the author to leave behind beautiful flowers for others to enjoy after they pass away.

The Gentle Gardener

*I'd like to leave but daffodils
to mark my little way,
To leave but tulips red and white
behind me as I stray;
I'd like to pass away from earth
and feel I'd left behind
But roses and forget-me-nots
for all who come to find.*

*I'd like to sow the barren spots
with all the flowers of earth,
To leave a path where those who come
should find but gentle mirth;
And when at last I'm called upon
to join the heavenly throng
I'd like to feel along my way
I'd left no sign of wrong.*

*And yet the cares are many
and the hours of toil are few;
There is not time enough on earth
for all I'd like to do;
But, having lived and having toiled,*

*I'd like the world to find
Some little touch of beauty
that my soul had left behind.*