

Vincent (Vinnie) Cooney RIP
Funeral Mass
Monday 11th December 2023

Vinnie passed away, unexpectedly, at Midlands Regional Hospital, Portlaoise, on 6th Dec 2023. Dearly loved son of John and Betty, and much loved brother of Martina. Vinnie will be sadly missed by his parents, sister, uncles, aunts, cousins and a wide circle of friends.

After our conversation the other day, John and Betty I was thinking back on the various things we talked about. I was thinking of the day you got married down in Betty's home parish of Ballycallan back in 1974. Your wedding was in the newly opened church in Kilmanagh. On that day as you stood before the altar and as part of the ceremony the priest asked you 'are you willing to accept with love the children God may send you? You answered yes to that question. No couple on their wedding day can know what those solemn promises and yes's are going to mean in their lives. You would go on to be blessed with your son, Vinnie and your daughter Martina.

Vinnie as I understand it was living life to the full, a brilliant hurler and a lover of all sports. Then as a young teenager while at secondary school in Rathdowney he had his first encounter with the illness which I suppose was to be part of his life right up to his unexpected death last Wednesday. As that illness in some ways overshadowed Vinnie's adult life I am also very conscious of the impact that it had on you his parents and also for you Martina.

While I have used the language that Vinnie's illness overshadowed his life I think from everything I have learned about him, Vinnie did not allow his illness to *define* his life. While he may not have been able to continue a playing career in hurling and the other sports he loved, his passionate interest sport remained, if anything grew stronger, and it was the great love of his life. The one sport he was able to play was of course pool and he excelled at it becoming an All-Ireland champion

representing Laois just a few months ago, I was struck by one of the tributes to Vinnie on RIP.ie. It read....

Whoever was lucky enough to play with Vinnie were nearly always the winners

The other thing that struck from the pages of messages on RIP.ie was that Vinnie obviously had a great capacity for friendship. Many of those friends I'm sure he had made through a shared interest in the sports he followed and loved.

Our gathering here in Durrow this morning is primarily to commend Vinnie to the love and mercy of God. The words of the reading today from the Book of Wisdom reassures us when it says, *the virtuous man, though he die before his time will find rest..... He has sought to please God and God has loved him*

The Gospel talked about rooms in the Father's house that are awaiting Vinnie's arrival. Now if there could be a pool table in Vinnie's room, he would know for sure that he was in heaven.

John, Betty and Martina, Our hearts and our sympathies go out to you today. I know that it is hard for you to imagine that the burden of the grief you feel today will ever lift . I pray and I hope that in time you will come to know as Vinnie now knows that you do not walk alone in this grief and pain. Perhaps the words of that great Liverpool anthem, which I'm sure Vinnie often sang in Anfield and elsewhere, they put it better:

*At the end of the storm
Is a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of the lark*

*Walk on through the wind
Walk on through the rain
Though your dreams be tossed and blown*

*Walk on walk on with hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk ALONE*

Vinnie, May your gentle soul rest in Peace

