

We have come here today to remember with thanksgiving Bud Bryce, husband, father, grandfather, firm friend and of course pilot. Bud was born in Canada and served in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Following on that he moved into civil aviation in Canada. Then, at a time when Aer Lingus were expanding into the transatlantic routes, along with a number of compatriots, he came to Dublin.

He told me not so long ago that a move back to Canada was postponed by a meeting with Gowan Jeffares and the rest, as he said with that wry smile, was history. Here they established their home and family, rearing their three boys David, Andrew and Richard.

Bud would not have described himself as a religious man yet whenever I spoke to him I was aware of a deeply principled man, a man with a deep sense of thankfulness for life, for the blessings that life had brought him. Over the last number of years his health has declined but Bud, being Bud, was determined that he would live life to the full and in this he enjoyed the love and support of his wife Gowan and the rest of the family. he was extremely grateful for the team in Beaumont and the people who donated blood for what became increasingly regular blood transfusions. Only latterly did the much loved annual trip back to California have to be stopped but he still maintained his friendship and meetings with friends.

In more recent times he would have spoken of his mortality. Observing with that shrew smile and Canadian accent that never went away, ‘Kevin, I guess I’m in the departure lounge.’ Realistic but not

morbid; for as he said that there was a sense of peace and contentment as he looked back over his life. His marriage to Gowan; he and Gowan were very much a team. Gowan had provided that home base in which the boys grew up and gave wonderful love and support to Bud in the course of his illness. The family were very important to him and he took great pride in all three of his sons and the grandchildren.

he clearly loved flying and the opportunities it gave him from his time in the air force, the transatlantic flights, his time down in Toulon with BAC as Aer Lingus prepared to develop its Airbus fleet. There was his time in Africa, telling again with a wry smile how he managed to gain the trust of one particular African ruler. And of course he featured in that Aer Lingus ad – the music of which will be played at the end of this service.

Living in Howth enabled Bud to develop another passion, that of sailing. A skilled and experienced sailor, he enjoyed both the local club competitions and the longer haul trips, including participating in the Fastnet race. He gave generously of his time and skills in his support of the RNLi and also helping fellow mariners in the repair and servicing of their boats.

I recall a warm, engaging, deeply principled man of generous spirit, who evoked respect in all who worked with him and the love and affection of family and friends.

But of course in the midst of our thankfulness there is the deep sense of loss experienced by Gowan, by their sons David, Andrew and Richard and their families.

There is now a huge gap in their lives as Gowan begin to build a life together without the closer presence of Bud. But of course the love that bound Bud and his family together lives on as they remember with tears and laughter one who meant and continues to mean so much. Those of us outside the family circle come today to offer our love and support, to assure you of our love and our prayers in the days that lie ahead.

We come to set the mystery of death in the context of our Christian faith. We have recently celebrated Christmas, the feast of the Incarnation, Emmanuel, God among us in the person of Jesus Christ. In the course of our Christmas services we heard those lovely words from St John's Gospel:-

⁴What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

Darkness has not had the last word in the life of Bud Bryce. Sickness, weakness has not had the final say. A light has gone out in our lives. But the light shines on, the light of Christ, risen, ascended, glorified.

Our hope and prayer this day is life and peace for Bud in the closer presence of God, free from pain, from weakness.

I referred earlier to Bud's passion for sailing. The following is a poem that sets our hope for Bud and for ourselves in the sailing tradition of this lovely place:

A Parable of Immortality.

I am standing by the seashore.
A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze
and starts for the blue ocean.
She is an object of beauty and strength,
and I stand and watch
until at last she hangs like a speck of white cloud
just where the sun and sky come down to mingle with each other.
Then someone at my side says, 'There she goes! '
Gone where? Gone from my sight - that is all.
She is just as large in mast and hull and spar
as she was when she left my side
and just as able to bear her load of living freight
to the places of destination.
Her diminished size is in me, not in her.
And just at the moment when someone at my side says,
'There she goes! ',
there are other eyes watching her coming,
and other voices ready to take up the glad shout :
'Here she comes!'