

This morning we have gathered in All Saints Church for the funeral of Mr Des Meredith.. Des died peacefully last Sunday in St Francis Hospice here in Raheny with his wife and family at his side. Over the last couple of days there has been sorrow as they begin to come to terms with their loss. There has been remembering and thankfulness – some tears and some laughter.

They remember a family man, a man with a love and zest for life. he grew up near Carlow and went to National School in Carlow town before heading on to Kilkenny College and Mountjoy School He may have been brought up on a farm but, as the family have remembered with some amusement, farming was not for Des and he came to Dublin, working for 40 years in General Accident Insurance Company, where he was highly respected, eventually becoming Motor Superintendent.

They remember a father to Mark and Carol, a loving husband to his wife Thyra of some 47 years. Des and Thyra had stood alongside Carol on the death of her own husband some 6 years ago and her own subsequent illness. While he had lived with diabetes for a number of years, his health had deteriorated from last November – this has been hard for Des, hard for the family to watch. I thought of words from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to Timothy as Paul proclaims, ‘I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.’ Today is a day for you to come before God with your own particular memories of Des and give thanks to God for all that he has meant to you as husband, as father, as brother and friend, to thank God for all that was good and true in his life, his courage in the face of adversity, his love and friendship.

Des was one who took a great interest in life, in people. An accomplished in his day, playing hockey and cricket and in later years taking up golf., he retained a lively interest in sport all his day. In latter years he loved to go over to watch cricket at Lords with his son Mark Reared in the Midlands, the

Parish Whistdrives would have featured in the social calendar. Des developed a passion for bridge and at one stage was a member of three clubs – as well as fitting in the odd game of poker.

We read as our first lesson from the very end of the Book Revelation. After all the visions experienced by the writer, he tells of his final vision of a new Jerusalem, a place of hope and healing in the presence of God:

. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
"See, the home of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell with them as their God;  
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them;  
<sup>4</sup> he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away."

The home of God is among mortals. That for me is one of the fundamental messages of the Gospel. In the person of Jesus Christ, God entered into our humanity; he experienced in himself what it was to be human, to know suffering, to know fear, to know loss. He not only has experienced it, he has conquered it in his resurrection from the dead.

Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

Those of us outside the family circle have come to offer our love and support to his wife Thyra, their children Mark and Carol, his brother Leslie and sisters Doris and Iris.

We gather this morning to commend Des, as husband, as father, as brother, as friend, the one who stood by others, who listened, who understood, the one

whose friendship and love we valued and enjoyed to his heavenly Father. As we do so we set our own lives in the context of eternity, our hopes and our fears, in the context of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying that he may watch over us and keep until the day of our own departure from this life.

We give them back to thee, dear Lord, who gavest them to us. Yet as thou didst not lose them in giving, so we have not lost them by their return. What thou gavest thou takest not away, O Lover of souls; for what is thine is ours also if we are thine. And life is eternal and love is immortal, and death is only an horizon, and an horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight. Lift us up, strong Son of God, that we may see further; cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly; and draw us closer to thyself that we may know ourselves to be nearer to our loved ones who are with thee. And while thou dost prepare for us, prepare us also for that happy place, that where they are and thou art, we too may be for evermore.