

We gather here today in Dardistown for the Funeral of Susan Magan. But for Covid 19, this service would have taken place in St Mary's where Susan worshipped. True to her nature as a very private person she would have slipped in and out. Here many friends would have joined you her family to thank God for Susan and to support you, her immediate family, in your loss.

Funerals are always occasions of parting, so there is a sadness that one who we loved, who loved us has now died. So today we remember Jane and Arthur and the wider family.

We gather with our memories of Sarah, as mother, grandmother, friend. We gather also to set her life, her death, our hopes for her in the context of our faith, her faith. We remember. You her immediate family will have your own very special memories of her and I invite you to just hold them before God

Susan had been born in Hampshire; her father was based in Portsmouth during his service in the Navy. The family finally settled in Howth in 1976 and it is here the Susan and her husband made their home.

She is remembered as a quiet and reserved person. She would often speak of the summers spent down in the cottage in Kerry with the family – that was clearly a special place for her. One group she did enjoy was Iris Seymour's art group, only stopping in recent times. Though I gather that the family saw very little of her work.

She did enjoy her garden. One of the features of a garden is the whole matter of seasonality. There is a time to plant, a time for harvesting, a time for pruning, for digging something out.

We have just read that passage from Ecclesiastes that talks of the cycle of life:

For everything there is a season, and a time for every  
matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

This cycle is part of the rhythm of life. I think one of the biggest lessons in life is coming to terms with this cycle that is our mortality, feeling in tune with that, at ease in that cycle.

As she worked in her garden, Susan will have understood the lesson of the seed. The seed, seemingly so insignificant, so vulnerable, contains within it all the potential of the magnificent plant. But before that can happen, we have to let go of the seed, bury it in the earth, before the full potential of the seed can be realised

In John's Gospel reading, Jesus spoke of this same process of seed, of planting, of letting go.

<sup>24</sup>Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

<sup>25</sup>Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. *John 12:24,25*

It is in this process of losing and finding, of letting go that we find our true selves.

You as a family are having to let go. It is our hope and prayer and trust that the one we have let go has entered into that fuller life that God has prepared for us all, where there is no more sorrow, no more separation from those who have gone before – only peace in the closer presence of God.

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.