

We have come here today to remember before God Mrs Betty Tighe, to comfort one another, particularly her husband Teddy and their children David and Janice and the extended family. Betty's death in Italy was sudden and unexpected. The difficulties the family have experienced in bringing her ashes home have added an extra edge to their loss and sadness.

We gather here in St Mary's where she would have slipped in quietly on a Sunday morning and just as quietly slipped out. We gather with our memories, our love, our loss and our thanksgivings. The family, as they have prepared for today, have been very anxious that this should be a service of thanksgiving. Betty had lived to a good age, she had enjoyed good health – sickness seemed to be something that Betty Tighe did not seem to have time for – she died in a place she loved to visit in the company of family and friends.

Born Elizabeth Jarrett, one of a large family in Rathmines she met with Teddy Tighe, strangely enough on a golf course. They married and lived initially in Castleknock before settling in Howth in the house on the Nashville Road. It was here that they reared their children David and Janice before moving to Howth Castle. David has shared some of the family memories of Betty.

Betty and Teddy shared 58 years of marriage, separated only recently by Teddy's need for full time care. Teddy and the family remember Betty as very caring, very loving as wife, as mother, grandmother, sister, friend. She and Teddy shared a passion for golf, which they enjoyed for many years together.

But it was all so sudden. That suddenness can catch us all off balance. There are no chances for goodbyes; it sharpens our awareness of loss; something in us still cannot believe this has happened. A funeral, a memorial service provides us with an occasion to reflect. As part of our preparation of ourselves for this service, we look back and realise how much our lives were intertwined not only in the big things but the simple things of sharing meals, the round of golf, just being in each other's company, the simple conversations in which advice was given, in which thoughts were shared. We thank God for all that this lady had meant to us and will continue to mean to us.

Those of us outside the immediate family circle have come here today to show our love and our sympathy to those who will miss Betty most. We think particularly of her husband Teddy, their children David and Janice and their families and Betty's brothers and sisters. We offer them our love and our sympathy not just today but for the months to come as they come to terms with life without Betty.

Any death, but particularly a sudden death, is a reminder to us all that life is precious, life is a gift; we are reminded of the importance of taking the opportunities it offers, opportunities to express love, of not taking each other for granted, of making use of the opportunities that life brings our way. It is a reminder in short of our own mortality.

We come to set the mystery of death in the context of our Christian faith. I begin with Easter, with life triumphant over death that lies at the heart of our faith. In this I am reminded that we follow a Lord who knows what death,

what suffering, what loss is all about; one who knew what it was like to weep and the grave of his friend Lazarus. Not only that, he is the one who was raised triumphant over death, breaking the power of death itself. Knowing in his own person what it was all about, I find in him one to whom I can come in my own time of suffering and find real comfort, real strength and real hope.

On this day, as we have come to thank God for the life of Betty Tighe and the love we have shared with her, we have come also to offer our love and support to those who will miss her most. May you, the family and friends of Betty Tighe know something of the presence of Christ in these coming days and in his presence come to know something of his peace