

We gather here today on this Monday of Holy Week for the funeral of Mrs Irene Trimble, long time member of this Parish, faithful in her membership of the choir, of the Parish. Holy Week is a time of remembering, remembering the events that lead up to the death of Jesus on the Cross. Good Friday gives way to Easter, death gives way to resurrection. And so we come today to set our sadness and our loss in the context of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Irene died quietly in her home, with Valerie at her side, in her home in Binn Eadir last Wednesday, just short of her 90th birthday. Irene had been born in Tipperary and went to School in Cork. In 1940, when she was 18 she came up to Dublin to study in English and history in Trinity. This was in the times when not many women went to university and female students were escorted off campus from the 1937 Reading Room at 5:00pm and dispatched to their accommodation in Trinity Hall in Rathmines. The family have a photo of Irene sitting on the steps of the 1937 Reading Room. On graduation she was appointed as a teacher in Bertrand and Rutland School, later to be absorbed into Mount Temple. On her marriage to Charlie Trimble she was obliged to retire and she and Charlie set up their home together in Clontarf before moving to Howth where they brought up their three children, Hilary, Valerie and Ken.

The family was very much the focus of Irene's life and they recall holidays spent in the west of Ireland, in a cottage that had no electricity. She would speak with obvious pride and affection of her children and their families and all that they had achieved and until very recently would have joined them on holidays. Another abiding interest was her garden. She was a long time member of the Sutton and Howth Horticultural Society. Even in her latter years, whenever you went to visit her there were plants in the conservatory and she obviously still took great pleasure in growing things. She was of course a born teacher and in 1963, along with a life long friend Alex Bell, established

Bracken Hill School. Initially this was located in the Bell home at Bracken Hill but eventually moved to its present position on the Balkill Road. Bracken Hill quickly became a valued institution on the hill of Howth and many pupils passed through its doors and they all remember Irene with great affection. Even after she retired from Bracken Hill, Irene continued to teach music there for a number of years.

That leads into another interest in Irene's life, that of music. Irene loved the music here in Church and good hymn singing. Irene sang for many years in the choir here in St Mary's, only finally standing down when the stairs up to the gallery became too much a couple of years ago. The last time she was here was for the Carol Service before Christmas. She enjoyed it and the choir took great pleasure in seeing her sitting at the front of the Church.

Irene's health had declined over the last couple of years. I think for Irene the hardest part of that was her loss of memory. Over this time Irene received wonderful care and support from her daughter Valerie, that enabled her to stay in her own home, in the latter stages with the support of carers. Her battle ended last Wednesday in her own home just as she would have wished, with Valerie and Patrick by her side. I spoke earlier of Holy Week, our remembrance of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we follow the events of this week, Good Friday gives way to Easter, death gives way to resurrection. That lies at the heart of our hope for Irene and for ourselves. The family chose as the lesson to be read today a passage from Paul's letter to the Romans that speaks of the reality of suffering, of the trials we face in life but then goes on to declare with equal certainty the reality of our resurrection hope, a hope that triumphs in the face of all that this mortal life can throw at us. God in Christ has known the reality of suffering, the

loneliness of suffering, the reality of death itself and has triumphed. And so in the face of death we join with Paul in demanding:

³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 835, 37-39*

Of course however strong our faith, however much we know that death is a release for our loved ones, there is still a very proper sadness on an occasion such as this as we say farewell to someone who has been so much part of our lives, with whom we have shared so many memories, so much love and in this regard we think particularly of Valerie and Hilary and Ken on this day. Those of us outside the immediate family circle have come today to assure you of our love and prayers not just for today but for the weeks and months to come as you come to terms to life without Irene.

Today we commend Irene to the loving care of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Inspired by her example and her faith let us this day dedicate ourselves afresh to the worship and service of Almighty God looking forward to that day when we shall be reunited with those who have gone before us in the faith.

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.