

Funeral of Canon John Murphy R.I.P.

Born 7th November 1940.

Educated St Patrick's College Cavan and St Patrick's College Maynooth.

Ordained Cathedral of SS Patrick & Felim, Cavan 19th June 1966 and returned to Maynooth for Higher Diploma Education.

September 1967 Appointed professor St Patrick's College, Cavan.

2 August 1986 appointed CC Cavan.

11 August 1990 appointed Administrator Cavan.

30 August 1997 appointed PP and Vicar Forane Killann.

September 2014 retired as PP to take sabbatical leave.

1st September 2015 appointed CC Kill.

Retired in 2018.

Welcome – Bishop Martin Hayes.

Our sympathies to his sisters Maureen, Kathleen and his brother Paddy, sister-in-law, Nora, brother-in-law John, his nieces & nephews Nóirín, Caitríona, Siobhán, Fionnuala, Padraíg, Bláithín, Mary-Rose, Seán, James & Yvonne, his grand-nieces & grand-nephews, all his extended family & friends, Bishop Emeritus Leo O'Reilly and his fellow priests in the diocese of Kilmore, in particular, Fr Anthony Fagan. In praying for Canon John, we remember his parents James and Mollie and his brother-in-law Jim.

Homily – Bishop Martin Hayes.

John was born on 7th November 1940 to James Murphy and Mollie (nee MacHugh) of Drumcannon. We give thanks for their family life and his childhood in which faith and a deep awareness of the mystery of God's creation were central. He was educated at Tomena National School, St. Patrick's College, Cavan and St. Patrick's College, Maynooth.

The readings chosen by John offer an insight into his calling to priesthood. He recognised the privilege of his calling. The Book of Proverbs proclaims that our calling is there from the beginning, is not just of this life, but is there from the beginning of time. It states that God has been involved from the very beginning of creation. In this choice of scripture readings for his Funeral Mass, Canon John, raises our awareness of our place in the universe – that while we are just a tiny part of creation,

yet we each have a vital contribution to make. Indeed, we are all connected, in an interdependent relationship with each other as is the theme of *Laudato Si'* on Care for our Common Home by Pope Francis.

The wisdom of the Book of Proverbs illustrates that we are participating in a dance, and it highlights the joy of being one with all of life in its different forms. We are of the stardust of the galaxies, which eventually evolved into the planets, the beginning of life on Earth and all that follows...

I am reminded of the spiritual writer, Sr Joyce Rupp, a Servite Sister, who realised that we are made up of the stardust, that we all breath the same air and that we are part of this dance, this cosmic dance. Our scripture reading from the Book of Proverbs speaks of the **dancing of the master artist**, of the joy of the Designer, of the intricate plans of God, our Creator.

A sense of being loved by God is communicated; of our Creator taking delight in us and of we in turn being capable of taking delight in all of God's creation, or as it says of others, "**finding my delight in the children of men**", in the dignity of others. John had an appreciation of others, of those in his care as a priest of his fellow priests, of his family and friends.

What is especially, significant for me in this reading is that which reveals John's appreciation of his vocation to priesthood. Those lines which speak of "**God possessed me....I was set in place...I was anointed from the beginning...**" are not being presumptuous! They are a confirmation of God calling us, each to her or his own vocation in life. In being selected by Canon John for his Funeral Mass, our scripture reading is an invitation to consider the vocation of priesthood. In celebrating the Funeral Mass of a priest, the 58 years of John's ministry, our thoughts turn to the future of the priesthood. The calling to priesthood remains and it is important that we highlight that vocation, especially, as fewer are responding in this part of the world today, yet the need for priests here is even greater. This is our opportunity to nurture a culture of the appreciation of the mystery of God continuing to call each of us from the beginning. We pray today for vocations to priesthood, for a response from those who feel that calling and that we will be open to encouraging a generous response.

Ordained in 1966, John served as teacher in St Patrick's College, as curate and administrator in the Cathedral, then PP and VF, in Bailieborough, and later as curate in Kill until his retirement. A renowned teacher of Latin and Irish and as a preacher, who once he took a stand, remained firm. He was a man who valued contact with his family, the next generation and the next generation after it. Of course, he was still living his vocation of priesthood – after his 52 years of active ministry, he was still in ministry to his last breath on Monday morning last – he carried his cross to the end.

As an effective preacher of the Word of God, Canon John taught **the Good News without using big words that would make the Cross lose its power**, to quote his

chosen 2nd Rd from St Paul to the Corinthians. It is a reading that is a reflection on suffering. While esteemed as a teacher, yet John is declaring that, we do not have all the answers and highlights that **‘God will confuse those who think they know so much’**. John carried his cross patiently, over the past two and a half years.

“But (of course) **we preach that Christ was nailed to a cross**” according to St Paul. That was a reality for John in recent years, he preached that message with his life. It was the completion of his priestly ministry – we may, and I did ask *‘why’* at times in visiting Fr John? On reflection, **in his weakness was his strength**, the strength of Jesus was carrying him. He shared the pain of all who are suffering. Henri Nouwen, the spiritual guide declares, that entering the pain of another, says *“I am human, fragile, and mortal, just like you...”* Coping with suffering is part of the cosmic dance of life. John participated in that dance that includes the groan of suffering. We give thanks for the care that Canon John received from the staff at College View Nursing Home, Cavan.

Those themes of humility before God and the reality of suffering emerge in the Gospel scene of the Crucifixion of Jesus between the two thieves, the Good Thief and the Bad Thief. All of us are ‘thieves’, we are all frail, inclined to take what we can from life, without always appreciating the source of life. The Good Thief recognised his weakness, his frailty and his need for forgiveness and so in pleading for forgiveness he is forgiven. In that spirit we entrust Canon John Murphy to the Good Lord in the hope of Resurrection as won for us by our Saviour, Jesus Christ whose Birthday at Christmas we are preparing for in this Advent time – a time of waiting in hope, a hope that will be fulfilled eventually, with God’s help in eternal life.

We give thanks for the ministry and dedication of Canon John Murphy to the mission of Kilmore Diocese, as teacher and priest, administrator, pastor, spiritual director, for his fraternity with his fellow priests, for his love for his people in the parishes in which he served, for the value he placed in keeping contact with his family, and their appreciation of his friendship.

To conclude, a line from the poetry of Sr Joyce Rupp, from her book entitled *The Cosmic Dance*,

I closed my eyes and waited, trusting in some faithful teaching. At first, I heard only the clashing jangle of my overextended and anxious life, but the longer I was attentive the more I noticed the steady heartbeat of something strong, deep and true¹.

May Canon John Murphy rest in peace.

¹ *The Cosmic Dance – An Invitation to Experience Our Oneness* by Sr Joyce Rupp, o.s.m., Orbis Books (2002), p 29.