

Church of the Good Shepherd
and
St. John the Evangelist

Friday, February 17, 2006
Fr. Bill McGinty

“Franklyn Lincoln Hunter”

Welcome to this service, on behalf of Lynn and Lois, for their father Franklyn Lincoln Hunter. We are gathered here today because we all belong to something very special. However great or however small we all experienced the life and spirit of Franklyn. He was to all who knew him and to all whose lives he touched, extraordinary. This beautiful little church is where he worshipped each Sunday. Here he prayed and encountered his God, his Christ. Yet, out there Franklyn belonged to an even larger church. It was a church that was totally interdenominational, made up of people of every creed and persuasion. They were people he met on a daily basis. Whether it was at the Bank or the Doctor's Office, Franklyn engaged people of every station in life with a smile, an enthusiasm and a good word. He had a story to tell, and a ready ear to listen. They were his church, his people and he lived every day in that spirit.

Here at a parish level we came to learn something about Franklyn's extended family. How much each one of them meant to him, from his two children to his 7 grandchildren to his 10 great grand children, was apparent in dozens of stories, photographs that he cherished and accounts of each one of their progress and achievements. With each of you he lived every moment and every high point with a true sense of pride.

In the last three years he volunteered so much of his time down here in the parish office. He was such a great part of the Renaissance and recovery of this old church. Putting the parish magazine together, I heard of all the exploits of the past and how he had been made an “honorary Irishman”. We laughed at the thought he was an American going over there to be an Irishman, while I was an Irishman coming over here to be an American.

Yet for all that we may talk of Franklyn's spirit and great character, we have in a sense, to look beyond those things, to his deep faith. He belonged to a generation that had come through the depression and through war. The loss of his parents had made him independently minded and self sufficient. But it was his deep faith in Christ, his religion and his God that he carried with him and which gave him his strength.

We all meet God in different ways. It's my belief that Franklyn found God in the love and person of one woman, Helen. From that moment, neither love nor God ever left him. It motivated him and gave him faith and with that faith he believed he could accomplish anything. People talk about what needs doing. Franklyn prefer to get right on and do it.

“Fr Bill” he said to me, “I was blessed with living my life with the best wife and daughters God ever placed on this earth. I don't know why I deserved it, but it happened to me.”

We could stay here all day and recount stories of Franklyn, from his skipping out on his first date to board a ship, to climbing ladders to paint the top corner of this church 10 years ago. Would that Helen had caught him!

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But there was also in Franklyn a sense that he knew that he was here for a God given purpose. And he strove to accomplish that purpose each day of his life.

“Sometimes I wonder why God has kept me alive so long,” he would say to me. “Then this morning I would know when I went to the ‘Bereavement’ group meeting at the Methodist church. There were people there going through what I did when I lost Helen. They need to know what I know and maybe that’s why God keeps me here.”

To Franklyn life was Helen, then it was family, but first it was Helen. “I didn’t see my point in going on after I lost Helen” he said, “till the day I opened the door and there stood a blonde haired angel. Her name was Connie.”

It was Franklyn’s first encounter with Hospice and with Connie. I suppose when Franklyn and the Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice met, it was like the merging of two kindred spirits. Two of God’s great love stories came together and what grew out of that relationship was a deep respect and gratitude to God for the gifts of life, and for life itself.

Today as a family and a community it is our opportunity to thank Julia Quinlan and Hospice for all they did for Franklyn. Franklyn’s spirit will live on with you and in your work. We only need to look across the road to “The Tree of Light” in the park, to remember how Franklyn made us all aware of how love can conquer the deepest pain.

To all of you who are family, especially Lyn and Tom, Lois and John, the grandchildren and the great grandchildren. You today should carry away a deep sense of pride for this man that you loved and who loved you so deeply. Most of us who knew him for such a short time, loved him, respected him and were inspired by him. How much more you who are heirs of a truly great love story, you who have his blood pulsating through your veins, how much more should you seek to emulate him and keep his spirit alive.

“If, Franklyn spoke to you today it would be to say: “God has given you a life to live. Live it to the best of your ability. And if he has given you too, the gift of love, cherish it all your days.”

We too in this church will feel the loss of we Franklyn. We do already. But with his unflinching faith and his undying spirit we know that we can achieve anything, even miracles. So it must be with all of you. Today Franklyn walks with his Helen. It is where he longed to be.

With a prayer in your heart, and the memory of this lovely man, let us today thank God for Franklyn, his life and his legacy.

Amen+

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