

Homily by Fr. Michael Murphy
At Requiem Mass for Dominic Murphy
Tuesday 3rd October 2000
Waterford

“So noble in character, so ardently on fire with divine love was Dominic that there can be no doubt that he was a chosen vessel of grace. Except when he was moved to pity and compassion he always displayed great firmness of mind. A joyous heart is reflected in a person’s face and Dominic revealed his happiness of soul by the joyful kindness of his look”.

These words, written of course about Dominic Murphy’s patron, Saint Dominic, the founder of the order of preachers could equally be applied to him, our Dominic, a beloved father, father-in-law, grandfather, cousin, uncle, friend, workmate, employee, neighbour, hospital patient, or fellow parishioner. For whatever in the way in which you or I were related to, or knew Dominic, we were related to and given the privilege by God of meeting and knowing a very special person.

If I was simply to list the facts of Dominic’s life and I’m not going to, he would probably appear to be a very ordinary person. But he was not – because Dominic did the ordinary things of life in an *extraordinary* way.

At the heart of Dominic’s life, the bedrock on which his life was founded, was his faith in Our Blessed Lord – there was nothing that could shake that. Even when in recent years scandals have, sadly, shaken the Church which supported Dominic’s faith, his own faith was unmoved – although he himself was saddened to see the Church he loved be so wounded. From his rocklike faith flowed Dominic’s firmness of mind, utter conviction and totally principled integrity. So much so, that sometimes you might disagree with Dominic, but you still always admired him.

Aidan and Francis, we, the relatives, extended family and friends of you and Dominic are here to grieve with you and to offer you our sincere sympathy. But we’re also here to say that at the end of your father’s life we hope you are proud of him, because we are. We are proud of him because he loved you: his sons, his daughters in law, Laura and Anne, and all his grandchildren. And you were a blessing for him, when retirement finally came – because, instead of enduring empty days, Dominic could fill his car with the grandchildren, taking them to school or out for the day in the holidays. And that pleased him, because he felt useful and needed and could be of service.

And service was another hallmark of Dominic’s life. Because for Dominic, the pressed service of the drudgery of daily work whether as a truck driver or a production line worker, was transformed into the Christian service of his fellow human beings, because what he did, he did gladly and well because he did it with love and generosity.

For from the heart of the Jesus whom he loved, there flowed into the heart of Dominic an utterly generous love for his fellow human beings. There are probably many of us here who at some time in our lives have been the recipients of Dominic’s generosity – and probably at a time when we needed his help most. But Dominic’s generosity extended well beyond the bounds of family and friends to include the whole world through his unfailing support through the years for the Church’s missionary work and its help for the victims of famine and natural disasters.

As we all know, Dominic displayed great firmness of mind and was always true to his convictions. And he wasn't just an Irishman and proud of it – he was a convinced Irishman. And while some of his convictions owed too much perhaps, to his vision of a holy and Catholic Ireland, I, for one, agree that a wealthier Ireland is not necessarily a happier Ireland and that, in gaining European Union material prosperity, Ireland is in danger of losing its spiritual soul.

Each of us will have our own memories of Dominic – those treasured moments which remain with us not just in the mind's eye but also in the heart. One of mine is childhood summer holidays. We could never afford a family holiday, but the sun always shone in those days – and Uncle Dominic always came over from Ireland. And that meant lovely days out on Fleetwood seafront, trips to Blackpool, Cleveleys, and Chester Zoo. And always a visit to Auntie Maura in Blackburn. I never drive on the A59 between Preston and Blackburn but the solid Lancashire stone walls speak to me of Dominic. And I thank God for him. Today, we thank God for all that Dominic gave to each one of us and the loving gift from God that he was.

And another memory for me is about three years ago, when Dominic and my Dad, Joe, stayed with me in the parish house in Preston for a few days. The two of them scampered around the house, and ran around Preston – heart conditions, blood pressure and all – joking, laughing, giggling, and talking all the time like two little boys. And Dominic *was* truly *childlike*, and, as Jesus said, “it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs”. He was simply, openly, accepting of the love of God and the values of the kingdom. He lived the teaching of Jesus: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”.

Joe and Tony are here, Maura is with us in prayer. We keep her in ours.

Dominic's slow deterioration and death from motor neurone disease caused him much suffering and us great sadness. But, as his body declined, the sheer goodness which was the core of his being and his total acceptance of God's will shone out with utter clarity: in union with Christ, Dominic has imitated His death: he shall imitate Him in his resurrection.

We thank the staff of Ardkeen General Hospital, and especially the staff of Our Lady's Ward in St Patrick's Hospice. As family particularly, we thank Dominic's cousin, Pat Walsh, - whose priestly ministry was an undoubted source of strength to Dominic in these last few months, but whose company and friendship these last few years was, I know, a great delight to him.

This morning, gathered around the Lord's table at the Eucharist in the presence of Dominic's dignified mortal remains, we express and celebrate our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And as we share of the food of life we look forward to the banquet which God has prepared for all peoples, when God will wipe away the tears from every cheek and will destroy death for ever.

Then we will take Dominic on his last journey – to Limerick and to his final resting place with his beloved wife, Mary. For all Dominic's happiness and the happiness he brought to others, in all the long years since Mary's death not a day has passed but he has missed her, and loved her and yearned for her. And now the yearning is over and the emptiness is filled. Mary and Dominic's mortal remains will finally lie together in peace. Their immortal souls will live, united now for ever in the love of God's presence.

God bless you Dominic with the light of his presence. God love you Dominic as you rejoice now with all the saints and the angels on whose feast you died. We will love you always. Pray for us.