

Bill's Memorial Mass celebrated by Fr Max Vodola on 9 September 2013 at St Brendan's, Flemington.

Helen Jordan on behalf of Bill's family.

Since Bill's unexpected death, many people have written and spoken to us about Bill and the difference he made in their lives. Bill had a special gift of making the people he was with, feel that they were the most important in his world, and that he accepted them just as they were.

We have talked to **people who worked with Bill in the parishes** and loved him for his serenity, wisdom, respect for others and their ideas, and his empowerment of them. I recall when first came to Flemington, he was rather daunted because there was no Parish Council and he needed to set one up. He was a real leaven in parish communities and set many things in motion that allowed laypeople and religious to participate in more meaningful ways.

People from the **Italian community** embraced us at the Funeral Mass and their grief and shock reflected the important role Bill played in their families' lives, and in encouraging them to celebrate their festas and traditions right here in inner Melbourne. In return, he basked in their warmth and very generous hospitality.

Bill really loved good music, especially sacred music, as an expression of the beauty of God and a help in experiencing Him. The **people in the sacred music and liturgy scene** speak of Bill's many talents and extensive knowledge in that field, that he brought to numerous projects and committees. Now they smile with delight when they find at his house, yet another box of historically important papers that will be preserved in the Diocesan Archives. One of his last writings was a chapter in a review of the post Vatican II Reform of the Liturgy. In it he includes a plea for more and better training in sacred music to be made available to people in parishes and schools. We hope some way can be found for this to happen.

His other many friends, and we, the members of **Bill's family**, were very aware of Bill's generosity with his time, even in his supposed retirement and his legendary inability to say 'no' to any request. Even when relaxing, he was always a priest, tuned in to the spiritual dimension of the situation, and each year, he took time to write a personal, inspiring message on each of the Christmas cards that he gave to family members and his many friends as well.

He was a **very special priest** - balanced, comfortable in his own skin and certain of his priestly vocation. He was utterly committed to his Faith and his flock and did his utmost, for over 50 years, to live out the message of Christ's love as perfectly and generously as he possibly could.

The two Masses that celebrated his life, were a great tribute to him, and helped to lift us all out of our human sadness at the time and reflect on the significance of his life.

The Monday evening Mass, celebrated by Fr Max, was a relatively intimate affair - with just about 500 of Bill's closest friends and priests present. It was a wonderful affirmation of Bill and an opportunity for us all to say goodbye and thank him for his special role in each of our lives. To find so many people from so many different walks of life, that he had touched in his priestly life, made us really proud to be part of his family, and it offered something of a challenge to each of us too. And to hear some of his favourite music, - including some Italian hymns - specially chosen by those who had worked closely with him in the parish was a mark of their thoughtfulness and affection for him.

The Requiem Mass on Tuesday, was a more formal celebration of Bill's priestly life, though Archbishop Denis Hart was also grieving the loss of a good friend. Never was so much incense or so many organ stops used to good effect. People say that 'Catholics do funerals well'. That

is because a Requiem Mass is a real affirmation of our belief that death is the gateway to eternal Life with God. Bill would have been embarrassed at so much ceremony on his behalf and so much praise for himself, but he would have loved the wonderful music and the gathering of so many of the people he loved.

What keeps coming back to me from the Requiem Mass are the words of Isaiah in the Christopher Willcocks hymn that Jeff Lock sang – ‘I have called you by your name – you are Mine.’ As a teenager, Bill was called by name to spend his life as a priest, and he accepted that call wholeheartedly. And when God decided that Bill’s work was done, He called him by his name for the last time to share eternal life with Him, as he will call each of us in due course.

Io voglio parlare poche parole a gli amici italiani di Padre Jordan.

Noi siamo insieme questa sera per la santa messa alla cara memoria di Padre Jordan, una tradizione importante nella communita italiana.

Dalla parte della famiglia, voglio dire un grande ‘grazie’ per la vostra affezione e l’ospitalita, che ha dato tanta gioia a Padre Bill.

Dio ha chiamato Bill alla vita eterna. Non e piu con noi, ma il suo spirito rimane in questa chiesa, nelle feste, le vostre famiglie e i vostri cuori.

Io credo che Bill non voleva che rimaniamo nella tristezza per un lungo tempo, ma che la nostra fede, forte e robusta, ci spinge avanti nella nostra missione. Io credo che Bill voleva che la vita, la parrocchia, le feste in famiglia, continuavano come sempre, nella gioia e non la tristezza. Ringraziamo il Signore per la vita di Padre Jordan e preghiamo per il buon riposo della sua anima.

Finally, We can tell you that we have discovered that Bill may have had a fault – he seems never to have been able to throw anything away.....

At the same time, we thank him for keeping the letter that Rosemary and Ray found in his desk during the week. I would like to conclude by reading you some of the thoughts written in it. The words say as much about the beautiful people who wrote them as they do about Bill:

‘You have been our rock in hard times, an ear when we needed to talk, an eye when we didn’t see what was around the corner; a helping hand when we were struggling;a warm heart when we needed some love; a wing to fly when we’ve needed some encouragement to overcome the hard situation; a light when we’re lost in the darkness;

...so many things you’ve done for us and all the times that you were being there for us no matter it is rainy day or sunny day.

Only a heart as dear as yours would give us so much, spiritually and materially....You touch our heart so deeply and changed our life forever. You are a blessing from heaven above and you mean the world to us; we admire and love you so much.

Our world is more beautiful and a better place to live because of you – Father Bill.’