

'A Road Less Travelled'



Thomas 'Tawdy' Morrissey, who was interred at Ballinaneesagh on Friday last following Requiem Mass at St John's.

THE flowers, flags and messages bedecking that famous seat near the Halfway House on the Tramore Road have been steadily growing since Thomas 'Tawdy' Morrissey passed away on Wednesday last.

Tawdy, who died at the age of 68, took, as Father Paul Murphy put it during Requiem Mass at St John's Church on Friday last, "a road less travelled - ordinary life wasn't for him".

Describing Tawdy was a "rare character in Waterford city...who had touched the lives of many, many people," Fr Murphy said that while his life, from an external perspective, may have appeared difficult, "within himself he was at peace".

To so many people who regularly used the Tramore Road down through the years, Tawdy was a fixture, observing life to-ing and fro-ing in either direction.

Many demonstrated great kindness to Tawdy during a life which Fr Murphy said had "taken a different path", be it through providing shelter, food, clothing or, from time to time, the odd can.

And that affection for Tawdy, who grew up in Castle Street, just around the corner from Brendan Bowyer, was demonstrated via a Facebook page which had over 4,000 'Likes' at the time of writing.

Not only that, but our own Facebook page has never been visited on an unprecedented level since Tawdy's passing, reaching over 26,000 web users since the news broke on Wednesday morning last.

Fr Murphy reflected on Tawdy's faith and the importance of faith within his life, adding that "in a way, Tawdy was on the outside - he was on a different path...Tawdy Morrissey stopped wherever he was, and he was made welcome". "Yes, it was a

road less travelled, but it was a true road to Tawdy, it meant a lot to him.

He was at heart a follower of Jesus, he was given to Jesus and therefore it is with confidence that we entrust Tawdy to the Lord at this Mass this morning.

“Tawdy Morrissey will now be remembered in and around Waterford because he touched the hearts and lives of so many, and if you like, he had reminded us that there is another way, that there are other paths that lead to the Lord as well – and Tawdy chose one of those paths.

” Tawdy’s coffin was draped in the Tricolour and a white and blue check Waterford flag, a framed photo of himself at Steinberg Fireplaces, taken by Noel Browne for this newspaper in the recent past and a bottle of champagne.

And that sense of the road less travelled, as alluded to by Fr Murphy during his homily, was suitably encapsulated by the playing of a track by a man of faith who himself opted for a road that not all would have chosen – Johnny Cash.

The chosen track – ‘Half A Mile A Day’ includes the following lyrics: I’m coming, Lord for my heavenly reward I’m on my way to You, can You see me coming through Through clouds of persecution and stumbling on the way But I expect I’m making about a half a mile a day.

Tawdy’s family expressed their thanks to all who participated in his obsequies, the Gardaí, the Ambulance service and “all who helped Tawdy along the way”.

Speaking on behalf of Mr Morrissey’s sister Kathleen, Jerry Tyrell said that his cousin Tawdy “was never in bad humour, he was always smiling when I arrived (at the Halfway House) – he never looked for anything, never asked you for nothing and if you had a few cans and handed them to him, there’d be a big 40-watt smile on his face.

“His way of life, to me, well, he enjoyed it and he was happy and he wasn’t going to change for anyone else.

It was like as if he was in his office, and that was his office and everybody came to him and explained things to him – he had a great amount of knowledge and charisma as well.

He had friends that came to see him year after year and he was always delighted to see them.

” Mr Tyrell concluded: “I just want to say that the next time you pass the Halfway House on the way to Tramore, give a honk on the horn and smile – and Tommy will smile back at you.

” Fr Murphy was joined in the concelebration of Requiem Mass by Bishop Emeritus of Waterford and Lismore Dr William Lee, along with Fathers Pat Fitzgerald, Paul Waldron, Paschal Moore, Eamon O’Driscoll, Michael Mullins and Michael Toomey.

Music was performed by Catherine Power while Vanessa Whelan sung the accompanying hymns.

Tawdy Morrissey is survived by his sister Kathleen, his cousins and to all who befriended him during his time on that road less travelled.

May he Rest In Peace.