

Tributes paid to 'The Purple Lady'



The late Catherine Coughlan, inset: the scene of the house fire on Priest's Road, Tramore. | Main Photo: John Kealy | Inset Photo: Jim O'Sullivan

TRIBUTES have been paid to an elderly woman who died in a house fire in Tramore last week. The fire broke out shortly before 1am on Thursday last at a house on Priest's Road.

Members of the emergency services and a neighbour managed to carry Catherine Coughlan out of her detached bungalow after the fire was discovered, but she was pronounced dead shortly after.

Fire crews from Tramore and Dunmore East worked at the scene for a number of hours and had the fire brought under control by about 4.30am. Gardaí do not believe the fire started in suspicious circumstances.

Miss Coughlan was a familiar figure around both Tramore and Waterford City and regularly frequented The Tower Hotel.

Father Michael Toomey paid tribute to Miss Coughlan at her requiem mass held in Holy Cross Church, Tramore on Sunday last at midday.

The family thanked all Miss Coughlan's neighbours and friends who tried to help out at the time of the fire on Thursday morning last.

The Fire Service, Ambulance and Gardaí, were also thanked. A retired nurse, Miss Coughlan worked in the Rotunda Hospital,

Dublin and Airmount, Waterford.

Educated in Ursuline Convent, she grew up in John Street, Waterford. She cared for her parents at home for a number of years. After their deaths, she moved to Tramore. Fr Toomey described her as a “devoted Catholic”.

Aged in her 70s, she had a routine of going to church regularly and was well known by her purple coat and two bags which earned her the title of ‘The Purple Lady’.

She often travelled into Waterford on the bus and stopped off to pray in the Cathedral. Her life was filled with dedication and prayer, said Fr Toomey.

He said Miss Coughlan went to Mount Melleray during Lent and she planned to go this Friday again and would stay in the Pilgrim’s Rest.

Fr. Toomey said that her devotion and faith was an inspiration to priests like himself and he recalled how she had a special place in the rear of the church to sit silently and pray. She was buried afterwards in St. Patricks Cemetery, Tramore.

Fr Toomey offered his sympathies to her nephews and nieces. Her relations were at the obsequies in Tramore as were her friends and neighbours in Tramore, who were shocked and saddened when they learned the news.

Numerous tributes were also paid on Facebook pages throughout the past week, with many people fondly remembering ‘The Purple Lady’. Ar Dheis Dé go raibh Sí.