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Friends, neighbours, and all who loved him,

I stand here as Patrick O’Connell’s son, Liam, but also as one of the many people who looked to him as a mentor and a steady hand through every stage of life.

Dad was born on 14 March 1956, raised in Cork city, and shaped by streets where everyone knew your name and your people. He met Mam, Maureen, at a parish dance. He went to talk to her once, and never needed another chance. For 44 years they walked side by side, a team in every sense, weathering ordinary days and great joys with the same quiet devotion.

For 35 years he delivered the post, and he treated it as a vocation, not a route. He was known by name on every street, but more importantly, he knew yours. He remembered the house with the new baby, the older man who’d just lost his wife, the student waiting on an exam result from abroad. He would knock a little louder for those who needed time, and he’d wait. People say his handshake meant everything, and it did—warm, firm, a promise kept.

Beyond work, he poured himself into the GAA. He coached youths with patience and fairness. He had time for the first-timer and the late bloomer, and he had an eye for the lad who needed a word more than a drill. He loved the rhythm of a club night, the sidelines in winter, the small miracles of teamwork in spring. It means a great deal that his club colours are laid on his coffin today. It feels exactly right.

He was a husband to Maureen, a father to me, to Aoife, and to Conor, and a proud granda to four grandchildren who lit up his days. Family first was not a slogan with Dad; it was how he moved through the world. If you asked him what he was most proud of, he’d point to us, then immediately to Mam, and then he’d say something modest like, sure, we did it together.

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He had the gifts of dependability and quiet humour. He was fair, patient, and a man of his word. He was also curious: about local history, the stories under our feet; about the Irish language, which he loved to pepper into conversation just to keep it alive; about the sea’s moods and the pull of the tides in West Cork, where he’d fish and listen and come home with more tale than catch, and that suited him fine. He loved a trad session, the fellowship as much as the tunes.

One of my clearest memories is of early Sunday mornings, when most of the city was asleep. We’d cycle together to the pier for a sea swim. No fuss, no fanfare—just the scrape of tyres on the road, the bite of the air, and then that first cold shock that made us both laugh. Afterwards, tea from a flask, two mugs steaming, and a chat about the week ahead. Those mornings taught me more than I realised at the time: that showing up is half the battle; that conversation doesn’t need big words to carry weight; that you can begin a week with courage if you begin it together.

In the parish and beyond, he was a community organiser in the truest sense. He didn’t make speeches about looking out for neighbours; he picked up the phone, he knocked on doors, he drove people to appointments, he checked the pitch lines were straight. He believed honesty wasn’t an act, but a habit. Faith for him was the same—steady, lived, humble. He loved the hymn Be Thou My Vision, and I can hear him now, not singing for show, but with that sure tone of a man who knows the words have carried many before him and will carry many after.

What will we miss most? His steady advice, which often came as a question that helped you hear your own good sense. The way he made time, even when he had none to spare. That handshake at the end of a tough day, saying without drama: you’re not on your own.

We grieve today, and rightly so. But we also give thanks for a life that did what it set out to do: to love family well; to serve a community faithfully; to keep faith with what is true and fair. If you want to honour Paddy—our Dad, our friend—do something simple and exacting in his name. Show up. Coach the team. Call the

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neighbour. Learn a line of a song or a cúpla focal and pass it on. Keep your word, even when no one is watching.

To Mam—Maureen—you and Dad built a home where we learned what enough looked like, and how generosity begins in the small, daily acts. To Aoife and Conor, and to his four beloved grandchildren, your granda leaves you more than stories. He leaves you a way to be in the world that is sturdy and kind.

Cork made him, this parish shaped him, and love carried him. As we commend him to God in this Funeral Mass, we hold on to the gift he was, and the tasks he leaves us. We will keep cycling into the wind when needed, we will take the plunge, and we will warm our hands around the day with a shared cup of tea.

Dad, go gently. Thank you for your patience, your fairness, your humour, and your steadfast heart. Thank you for every letter you carried and every person you lifted.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal.

Slán, Paddy. We’ll mind each other now. And we’ll carry your vision with us.

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