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Good morning everyone,

I’m speaking today as Seamus’s eldest grandson, one of the many blessed to call him Grandad Seamus, and all of us gathered here to commend him to God and to say thank you for the life he lived among us.

Grandad was born on 15 March 1942 in County Kerry, raised on a small farm near Killarney. The farm taught him a rhythm he never lost: up early, work steady, give thanks, and mind your neighbours. In his teens he apprenticed as a carpenter, and that gift carried him to Cork for work, to Mary for love, and to a life that was built, quite literally, with his own hands.

In 1966, he married Mary. Fifty-eight years later, their partnership is the best thing he ever made. He built their family home by hand — true to form, square, solid, warm. Inside that home, they raised Bríd, Colm, and Aidan, and later, seven grandchildren learned how a welcome should feel.

Grandad had a trade, but he also had a calling. He became a master carpenter known far and wide for restoring old sash windows. He loved giving old timber its voice back. He’d run his fingers along a frame and tell you what the grain remembered. He believed a house could breathe again if you were patient and you listened. That was true of people too.

For decades he gave his evenings and weekends to the local GAA club. He coached, he lined pitches, he fixed hurleys, he quizzed us on the rules, and he stood on the sideline as a mentor who cared as much for character as for scores. He had a quiet way with the young ones who needed a word, a joke, or just a lift home. “Ní neart go cur le chéile,” he’d remind us — there’s no strength without unity — and then he’d prove it by turning up, week after week.

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He was gentle, patient, witty, fiercely loyal, and quietly generous. He didn’t announce kindness; he left it on your doorstep and moved on. If something was broken — a window, a hurley, a spirit — he’d set it right, tidy the shavings, and make you a cup of tea.

Some of my clearest memories are from early mornings on Lough Leane. He’d knock softly on my door before dawn, hand me a sandwich wrapped in baking paper, and we’d set off while the world was still thinking about it. Out on the lake, he taught me to tie a line, to watch the light change, and to listen for the world to wake. He said a good fisherman minded the silence as much as the catch. I realise now he was teaching me about life, not just lines and knots.

He loved hurling, roses and spuds in the back garden, and a good traditional session where his foot kept the time under the table. He loved fixing anything with a bit of timber — chairs, gates, hearts. He was a master of the “that’ll do nicely” nod when a job was finished, but only after it was properly finished. Grandad never left a job half-done. If he thought it wasn’t right, he’d take it apart and start again with a smile and a mutter we were probably not meant to hear in church.

He put family first — always. He believed in hard work and in faith, the sort of faith you carry in your sleeves. He said a quiet prayer before every meal. It wasn’t a performance. Just a pause. A small thank you. In that stillness he kept us steady.

We’ll miss his twinkling eyes that said, “Go on, tell me,” his warm handshake at the door that took the chill off any day, those Sunday dinners that gathered us like a net, and the stories he saved for the young ones — never wasted on the distracted, always delivered to a grandchild leaning in.

To Mary, his wife of 58 years, you were his anchor and his harbour. To Bríd, Colm, and Aidan, he was so proud — not of what you achieved, but of the people you are. And to us seven grandchildren, his toolkit is more than saws and squares; it’s the measure he set for us: be steady, be fair, help out, and mind

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your neighbours. We'll treasure the actual tools, of course — there's a fight brewing over the old marking gauge — but we'll treasure most the way he taught us to hold them.

As we say goodbye at this Funeral Mass, it's right we remember the man of faith he was. He didn't make a fuss about it. He lived it. In the rosary beads on the locker. In the blessing of himself at the church door. In the way he saw dignity in every person who crossed the threshold.

If you want to honour him, here's how I think he'd put it, with that half-smile: turn up, do the work, keep the humour, and leave the place better than you found it. Say your quiet prayer. And when the job looks too big, call a neighbour, because "Ní neart go cur le chéile."

Today hurts. Of course it does. But it helps to hold the truth that his life wasn't measured in years alone — though 84 is a fine tally — but in the windows that open again, in the teams that still gather because he set the tone, in the roses that will bloom this summer, and in the grandchildren who know how to tie a line and listen for the world to wake.

Grandad Seamus, thank you for your hands that built and blessed, for your patience that steadied us, and for your stories that will grow legs and keep walking through our family for years to come.

May the road rise to meet you, and may we keep your tools sharp until we meet again.

Go raibh maith agat, Grandad. We'll mind each other now.

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