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Friends, family, and all who loved him,

Thank you for coming to celebrate the life of Michael Gallagher — our Mick — born on the 7th of September 1965 in Donegal, taken from us at 60, and leaving us with more stories than a lifetime can hold.

I’m Eimear, his wife, his partner in business and in mischief, and the person who knew exactly how he took his tea — and how he took his chances.

Mick was raised in Killybegs with salt in his blood and the sea as his first classroom.
He learned the tides from his dad, learned that a good crew is a second family, and learned that hard work starts before dawn.
In his twenties he headed for Galway, worked the boats with the same stubborn grit, and then did the most Mick thing imaginable — he turned the day’s catch into the sort of seaside café people still talk about, famous for chowder and craic and a welcome as warm as the ovens.

If you ever stood in that queue, you know the drill.
He’d be there with a story, a wink, and a bowl that always seemed to be a little fuller than you paid for.
Kindness over profit, he’d say, because the point isn’t the till, it’s the table.
He stood up for local producers, took a chance on young staff finding their feet, and kept an eye on anyone who looked like they needed a break.
If you worked with him, you weren’t just on the rota — you were in his care.

At home, he was the music and the laughter and the first coffee handed to me every morning, before I’d even found my slippers.
He spun ordinary days into something brighter.
My favourite memory is this: The Saw Doctors roaring out of a battered speaker,

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flour everywhere, me being twirled around the kitchen while the chowder threatened to boil over.
That was Mick — joy first, and somehow nothing burned.

He loved fishing at dawn when the world was still and honest.
He loved surfing the small summer waves, claiming each little green swell was “nearly a barrel.”
He’d play guitar with the back door open so the neighbours could “get their money’s worth.”
And he fixed bikes for half the kids in the area, oil on his hands, stories on his lips, and a fiver slipped into a pocket if someone needed it more than he did.

He was big-hearted and brave, a generous man with a quick tongue for the perfect line and an optimism that caught on like a good chorus.
With Mick, problems were just puzzles, and strangers were just friends on a delay.

He was — and always will be — my husband.
He was a proud dad to Niamh and Orla, who carry his courage and his mischief in equal measure.
He was an adored brother to Aidan and Siún, uncle to a tribe, and friend to more people than fit in any room.

What will we miss?
His bear hugs that set your ribs straight.
The music that followed him like a tide.
That first coffee each morning, passed over with a grin and a nod that said, Right so, let’s get on with another day.

He asked for bright colours today, and I can hear him now, delighted with the lot of you for honouring that.
And if you’re thinking of flowers, Mick would nudge you toward the RNLI — the lifeboats that watch over the waters he loved.

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We’re not saying goodbye to his spirit — that stays, stitched into the café’s walls, in the salt at Salthill, in the laughter he planted in every corner of our home.
We are promising to carry on the way he taught us:
Work hard.
Look out for the crew.
Find the joy that’s hiding in the ordinary day.

Mick, thank you for the life we built, the music you made of it, and the way you filled every room.
We’ll meet you in the stories, in the song, and in that first light over the water.
Until then, mo grá, we’ll keep the kettle on and the door open — just as you showed us.

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