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Friends, family, neighbours, and colleagues of Siobhán, thank you for gathering here in St. Mary’s Church, Ballincollig, to remember and celebrate a life that steadied so many of us.

I speak as Ronan, her younger brother who always looked up to his big sister.
To most of us she was Siobhán O’Connell.
To so many who loved her, she was simply Shiv.

Born on 14 March 1985, and called home on 5 April this year, at just 41, Shiv lived a life whose measure wasn’t in length, but in the weight of care she carried for others.
She learned that first at home in Ballincollig, with Mum and Dad, Mary and Patrick, and with me and our sister Aisling beside her.
Family first was not a slogan to Shiv; it was the quiet rule under every decision.

She brought that same rule with her to University College Cork, where she studied nursing.
From there to Cork University Hospital, where she became a senior nurse, her compass never changed: dignity for everyone.
On the ward she was known for a calm that didn’t waver when alarms sounded, and for a voice that lowered the temperature in a room before the medicine did.
She was a fierce advocate for patients who had no one to speak for them, and a steady mentor to new nurses who were learning how to be brave and gentle at once.

In 2015, she married Liam Doyle.
Together they built a home full of ordinary goodness and shared graft.
She was — and is — the beloved wife of Liam, the devoted mum of Aoife and Cian.
To our parents she remained a cherished daughter, to me and Aisling the sister

who could say a lot with a single raised eyebrow and a half-smile.

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Beyond work and home, Shiv gave herself to this parish and to community fundraisers, often without her name on the poster.
Faith, for her, was action: a lift to an appointment, a covered shift, a lasagne left on a doorstep, a raffle organised while pretending it organised itself.
She believed the small kindnesses matter most, and she proved it so consistently that you could plan around it.

I keep returning to one night at our kitchen table, just before my Leaving Cert.
I was in pieces, convinced I'd ruined everything before it began.
She put on the kettle, sat me down, and let me pour out nonsense until I ran out of panic.
Then she slid her own small St. Brigid's cross across the table — faded straw, the string a little frayed — and said, "Mind yourself first, then mind the paper."
I kept that cross in my pocket all through the exams.
It didn't make the algebra easier, but it made me braver.
That was her way: she couldn't remove the storm, but she could steady the boat.

There was also her lighter side, never loud, always sure.
Quietly funny, she could take the heat out of an argument with a single well-placed line.
Her laugh filled the room without shouting, and it told you that you were safe enough to laugh with her.

She had her rituals.
Brown bread warm from the oven, cut thick, buttered as if butter were a medicine.
Sea walks in Kinsale to reset the day, the wind reminding us of our proper size.
Camogie on the telly, commentary from the sofa that could outdo the pundits.
And a soft spot for crime novels, which she read with a nurse's attention to the small clue everyone else had missed.

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As a nurse, a colleague, a neighbour, a friend, she was relentlessly thoughtful and fiercely loyal.
She did not broadcast her goodness.
She repeated it.
Day after day, in ways that were easy to overlook and hard to replace.

What will we miss?
We'll miss her reassuring voice on the phone — not dramatic, just steady, like someone turning down the volume for you.
We'll miss her hand on your shoulder in a crisis, the grip that said "I'm here" when there was nothing clever to say.
We'll miss that laugh that lifted the ceiling, even in kitchens with low beams.

Today we hold Liam, Aoife, and Cian especially close.
Aoife and Cian, your mum's love is not something that stops; it changes address.
It lives in the way you speak kindly when it would be easier not to.
It lives in the way you stand up for someone smaller than you.
It lives in the way you look for the person left out and bring them in.
And Liam, the partnership you and Shiv built — patient, practical, rooted — is a story Aoife and Cian will carry with pride.

We also remember with gratitude the community at Cork University Hospital, who worked and walked alongside her.
It feels right that, in lieu of flowers, our family asks that any who wish to honour her consider a donation to the CUH Charity.
It is a way of letting her life continue its work.

In this Funeral Mass, we give thanks for God's gift of Shiv's life, and we ask for the grace to live as she did: with steadiness, with kindness, with that quiet humour that loosens the knot in the rope.
She would be the first to tell us not to make a saint's statue of her.
She preferred the ordinary holiness of showing up on time, telling the truth, and putting the kettle on.

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So let us carry her forward in what we choose next.
Let us be the reassuring voice on someone else’s line.
Let us offer the hand on the shoulder when there are no easy answers.
Let us keep faith by doing the next small, good thing.

Shiv, thank you for the years you filled — from Ballincollig to the wards of CUH, from the Kinsale shore to the kitchen table at home.
Thank you for your loyalty, your steadiness, your thoughtful way of noticing what needed doing and then doing it.
Thank you for the St. Brigid’s cross, for the brown bread, for the laugh that never had to be loud to be heard.

We love you.
We commend you to God’s mercy.
And we will honour you in the most fitting way we know — by minding one another, as you minded us.

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