

GRACE HAYDEN...

ADDRESS AT THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR GRACE HAYDEN GIVEN BY FATHER ROGER BARRALET OFM.

A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of

Grace Hayden
15th April 1925-6th July 2012



Pinner Methodist Church 18th July 2012

Service conducted by Revd Velma Campbell
and Father Roger Barralet O.F.M.

We have St. Paul's word for it: "We want you to be quite clear about those who have died, to make sure you do not grieve about them like other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus. God will bring them with him. So we shall stay with the Lord for ever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another." Perhaps equally importantly for us we have Grace's word for it: she wished that our focus this afternoon should be on thanksgiving!

Of course there is sadness and grief – for Ted her husband, for her daughters Carol and Judith, for the grandchildren and for all the family. A sense of grief, a shared feeling of loss – that unites us all. It is natural, it is right. Christ wept at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. And Paul tells us to comfort one another. That we do – above all by so many of us being here alongside Ted and the family.

But Paul tells us too that we do not grieve like others who have no hope. We share a vision, a faith, and a language

that tells us otherwise – about our lives, our deaths and what is to follow. Grace points to our focus: thanksgiving. In thanksgiving we remember – re-member: put together in our minds Grace's life: a life rooted in a deep faith, filled with the love of God, a love that was experienced in her family and from there shared with others practically and purposefully. It was a love that was first of all experienced, lived and enjoyed within the intimacies of her own family. Theirs will be the richest memories of Grace today. We have seen one special glimpse of it in her concern and care for Ted, especially at Scout conferences. A tribute has said: 'Grace was a wonderful person – she was the only person who could calm Ted when he was having one of his doos!' Frieda was there – but so was Grace.

It was with a very sure instinct that the reading chosen for this Thanksgiving for Grace is I Corinthians 13 – the hymn to Charity, to love; a pen portrait it has been suggested of Christ himself. It is a picture of love not as a sentimental emotion but as a practical commitment and concern for others that they too may have life and have it to the full: Love is patient, kind, not irritable or resentful...rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things. It was towards this practical, other centred and committed love that Grace directed her life. Her great commitments outside the family were: As a 'Friend of Harefield.' – she worked for over 20 years in the Visitors' Pavilion – a service that was recognised with a special certificate when she finally had to retire last year. That faithfulness to her commitments was characteristic of Grace. In the various tributes that I have seen to her there is the repetition of the word 'always.' 'Always had time for people;' 'always talked good sense.'

Then, of course, there was Grace's commitment to Scouting. For many of us here today it was in Scouting that we knew

and grew to appreciate value and love her. Grace had many appointments in Scouting. It began early. As a ranger guide in 1941 she became a Cub Instructor. From 1943-53 she was a Cub Scout Leader in Brentford and Chiswick District.

In 1953 she married Ted but the Scouting continued from 1954-1977 in Pinner. First as a Cub Scout Leader in this Church but later with a new pack at the Methodist church in Canon Lane. To this were added responsibilities as an ADC in Pinner District. Next door to this Church is the Catholic church where Sue Girvan was the Cub Scout Leader. There is a story that Sue was once in conflict with the District team and Grace was the peacemaker! From 1977 to 1990 Grace was ACC (LT) in Greater London North West now known as Greater London Middlesex West.

Rightfully and justly Grace's service in Scouting was recognised with the award of the Silver Wolf: the highest award in the Scout Association. All those appointments were significant; all were directed towards helping children and young people to grow, really grow as people through their Scouting. She never lost sight of that focus on young people. "Grace was a lady" it has been written, "who always" (there is that word 'always') "a lady who always had time for youngsters." That comment is linked to an interesting story about pieces of iced cake for all at a County camp. Grace as a trainer – how many she helped, both as Trainers and Trainees. 'Brilliantly motivated, she has touched so many who are her legacy.' Training has always been a priority for Scouting – its emphases and methods have been frequently reviewed and revised. In all this Grace 'always talked good sense.' Yes, we all have our special remembering- with gratitude, with thankfulness. But our faith tells us that there is more than remembering – we must also look to the future with hope. In the language of Scouting Grace has 'gone home.' That is a powerful image. Our imaginations are so little help about our life after death.

It has been wisely said that perhaps our biggest surprise will be that 'it is just like home.' But there is more to it than that. Death is not an end but a movement into something more wonderful and fulfilling. Perhaps the image of the baby coming to 'life' after the time in the womb helps. But even that is inadequate. For we believe that death is a transforming experience. We go back to St. Paul – we believe that Jesus died and rose again and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus. God will bring them with him. "With such thoughts as these we should comfort one another."

Father Roger Barralet, OFM