

country and, as a Catholic, with a universal spirit, the moral and spiritual condition of all countries. Hence, he was not nationalistic in the sense of “putting down” other countries; he was a patriot, loving his own country – Scotland – but he also loved Ireland, England, Wales, France, ... He never spoke badly of others, no matter what nationality, creed, race or football team they belonged to.

Gerry had a dry, witty sense of humour. When already quite unwell and staying at Dunreath, he was asked if he wanted some liquid high-energy, multivitamin juice that the doctor had recommended. He was shown the purplish-looking liquid and encouraged to drink it. All he said was: “OK, try”. So the person concerned brought it closer to his lips, thinking Gerry wanted to try it before committing himself to having a good drink. But then Gerry said: “No, No; YOU try it!”

Another day, puzzled by why some documents had one form of his name and others a different form, one of us asked him: “Gerry, what’s the difference between Gerard and Gerald?”, hoping for some high-powered explanation of Celtic forms of names and the ancient history of Alba... What he got in reply was: “A letter?”

Family and friends were very important to Gerry. You could see that he carried them all in his heart. He often mentioned them in conversations, for example to ask for prayers for someone who wasn’t well or for someone who was going through a hard patch, and he always made the effort to keep in touch with them, no matter how busy or how far away he was – physically – from them. He also offered up little sacrifices for them. For example, he liked butter and not the vegetable spreads that are around these days, and yet he very often used spreads on his toast instead of butter, as a small sacrifice for specific intentions.

He loved hiking in the hills and jogging, especially if he could do these with friends.

In 1995, with others who lived at Dunreath, he began a project, Citiwise, aimed at helping young people in deprived areas. After a few years in Castlemilk, the focus of this formative work moved to Sighthill. Renamed Reachout, Gerry became the Director and spent a good deal of his spare time on its development, administrative work, and fundraising. But not just on the project as such but on each one of the boys attending and to the leaders helping him. It was a project, and they were people, very dear to his heart because he realised this was another marvellous way of serving and helping others become better persons and hence contributing to a better society. In the last 18 months he initiated a very successful mentoring project, with volunteer undergraduate mentors from Glasgow University, helping students from Springburn Academy and St Roch’s Secondary School.

From the moment in hospital when he realised the seriousness of his illness, while he encouraged his friends who wanted to pray for a miracle, he would often add “Provided it is God’s will”. His calm, smiling and caring presence will be missed by all: his close family, friends and colleagues.

A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF GERRY MCCARTHY

15 July 1952 – 24 June 2010



“For Christ to reign in the world there is need of people who, with their eyes fixed on heaven, will work with dedication and distinction in all human activities and, from them, carry out quietly – and effectively – an apostolate of a professional nature.”

(St Josemaría Escrivá)

Gerard (Gerry) John McCarthy was born on 15 July 1952, in Glasgow, to Michael Gerald McCarthy (an Executive officer in the civil service) and Margaret Mary McCarthy. Two months later, on 17 August 1952, Gerry was christened at St Agnes' Church, Lambhill, Glasgow. He was confirmed on 11 December 1960, at St Augustine's, Milton, which remained his parish church until his death on 24 June 2010.

One of his sisters, Margaret, and a brother, Michael, pre-deceased Gerry. His other siblings are Mary, Helen and John who live in the Strathclyde area with their families.

In 1975, Gerry graduated at the University of Glasgow with an MA (Hons) in English Literature and Philosophy. Woodworking was his love, and he spent 4 years in his woodworking business, based in Argyle Street. In the early 1990's he completed an MBA at the Open University Business School. After 3 years in youth training in a computer company, he joined the General Register Office as a Western District Examiner and worked with them until his death.

It was his intention to return to woodworking on retirement, and he had recently completed a fully equipped shed in his back garden for this purpose.

He was introduced to Opus Dei by one of his friends, shortly after the Prelature began its work in Glasgow in 1981. Over the months Gerry came to know about the spirit of Opus Dei, putting into practice its core mission to practise holiness and to do apostolate in the midst of ordinary work and the ordinary circumstances of daily life. He began to feel God's calling, and joined Opus Dei in early 1983. As an "Associate member" he committed himself to a life of celibacy.

Throughout his busy life he went to daily Mass, and he made time each day for two periods of prayer, one in the morning and one in the afternoon or evening. It was from this deep spirituality that he derived his drive, his dedication to his work, his apostolic initiative and his constancy in the projects he initiated. When difficulties arose, whether of finance or personnel, he prayed for a solution as if this were the only means at his disposal, and then worked to tackle the difficulty as if he had not prayed.

Gerry has been the good and faithful servant that we read about in the Gospels, a bit like St Joseph: humble, unassuming, in the background, and yet a rock of support for those around him.

He has always been his usual gentle giant, considerate of others, forgetful of self. One can't remember him ever saying "No" to a request for help, whether it was to take someone home in the car, to do a repair in the house, or to look after somebody who needed a bit of spiritual or material guidance. Just in terms of repairs, the number of times Gerry helped out

when things needed doing in Dunreath, the Centre of Opus Dei in Glasgow, is countless: he's repaired chairs, tables, doors, benches... he's made plinths, radiator covers, credence tables... no matter how complex the problem, Gerry was the man to ask, even if it was just to point one in the right direction. Nothing was too much for Gerry. He went the extra mile for anyone who asked.

He loved the Church but was not "churchy". He knew God had called him to serve Him through his vocation to Opus Dei, seeking union with Him through his workaday life. He was highly regarded and esteemed amongst his colleagues, a testimony to his desire to work well for the glory of God and in order to serve others. Further testimony to this is how thorough and responsible he was. For example, when at the start of May, he was already feeling unwell and drained of energy, he did not allow himself any rest until he had finished an important end of year report for his boss, which he duly completed in time: "I don't want to leave it undone. It's important; lots of people have been involved and I can't let them down". Another example is how well he worked on wood when he had to make something: he did not allow himself a rushed, faulty job; he always wanted to do it to the best of his abilities, calmly, paying attention to detail in design and fabrication; he knew that love is shown through little things like that.

He wasn't one for loud laughter but rather a quiet, solid interior joy. This had also a lot to do with his self-forgetfulness and, instead, thinking about the others. When the district nurse came to visit him in Dunreath and Gerry was already very poorly and could hardly speak, he said to her: "Sorry to drag you all the way here." This humility also made him very grateful: he thanked people for any act of service or detail of affection he received from them (as from the visitors who came to see him while unwell or the GP or those in the house).

Another aspect of Gerry's personality was his wide cultural interests. He liked to hear and learn about other countries, other peoples' customs, experiences, etc. He was keen on history (especially Scottish history), on Philosophy, on Literature. When unable to go to work because of his illness, he made use of time to read a number of such books. One he enjoyed very much was a history of life in the island of Lewis a couple of centuries ago, which a friend had given him. This was partly due to his love for Scotland and people and partly because he knew the places well. As part of his job in the General Register Office, he had to visit all the Registry offices in the west of Scotland and had travelled widely on the mainland and islands. Full of faith and hope, and with an apostle's zeal, he prayed as he drove on all those roads, for these lands and its peoples.

This aspect of his love for Scotland is worth a note, because it was very deep and at the same time very supernatural. He had great sympathy for the Jacobite cause and we would often joke about the "King o'er the water" coming back to a restored Kingdom. But it was all just good banter. What really concerned him was the moral and spiritual condition of the