

10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF ST JOSEPH'S SERVICE

ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH, ROSEWELL

HOMILY PREACHED BY CARDINAL KEITH PATRICK O'BRIEN

THURSDAY 19TH MARCH 2009

Introduction:

I am very happy to be able to be with you this morning as we gather together in this magnificent church dedicated to St Matthew in Rosewell to thank God for all of the work of St Joseph's Service, based here in Rosewell.

Obviously, vitally important to the work of St Joseph's Service have been and are the Daughters of Charity, so happily here with us today; all those very many people linked with St Joseph's Service under the leadership of the Director of Services, Ms Winnie Tuohy; and, of course, all of the very very special people who have been linked with St Joseph's, Rosewell and St Joseph's Service over many years, and who are vitally important as we plan for the future.

The Early Beginnings:

It is very useful to look to our roots at a time of change and to think back to what inspired those who have gone before.

It was the motto of the Daughters of Charity: 'The Love of Christ urges us on', which urged an initial three of the Sisters to come to Whitehill House in Rosewell in 1924 to provide a home for children whose health was impaired mentally or emotionally, these Sisters later being joined by a fourth. As St Joseph had looked over the home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Nazareth some 2000 years ago, so St Joseph was chosen as the patron of the large new house where a new family had taken up residence: the Sisters with those for whom they were caring. Over the years various changes took place as the number of residents increased, along with the numbers of staff. St Joseph's also became a nurse training centre and then was recognised as a hospital; new wings were built and a school was opened in 1968, with a special children's unit in 1971.

Over those years unstinting care was given to those whose home was St Joseph's by the Sisters and their dedicated staff. No task was too difficult for anyone who lived or who worked at St Joseph's – and, of course, it was with great joy that everyone at St Joseph's welcomed the late Pope John Paul II in 1982 when he was on his visit to Scotland.

Current situation:

As changes have taken place in so many important parts of our lives over the past years, so too change took place in St Joseph's Hospital at Rosewell. Yes – there were changes in health boards, social work departments, and increasing emphasis was given to 'Care in the Community'. And that is what we are celebrating at this present time.

Some 10 years ago, in 1999, all of the residents came to be housed in smaller homes within the area of St Joseph's, Rosewell. As St Joseph's, Rosewell had housed one large community of love and care, so each of the smaller homes within the towns and parishes of Midlothian became again smaller homes of love and care.

'Care in the Community' ensured that everyone who came to St Joseph's Service was cared for according to their own particular needs and requirements. And overlooking this great 'St Joseph's Service' were the Daughters of Charity, the successors of those who had initially established St Joseph's in Rosewell in 1924.

And over those last 10 years, dedicated lay women and laymen, following in the footsteps of the Daughters of Charity and their great ideals of love and care for those less able, assumed positions of greater responsibility, so that at this present time it is Ms Winnie Tuohy who has become the new Director of Services at St Joseph's, with Sister Mai O'Connor, the last of the Sisters to be Director of Services, becoming a member of the Provincial Team of the Daughters of Charity.

What has not changed over the past 10 years is that it is the same love and care inspired by the Daughters of Charity, following in the footsteps of their great founders St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac, which is continuing day by day.

Wonderful parties are organised for everyone at St Joseph's Service: I am always invited and always come to the magnificent Christmas party in St Matthew's Hall, Rosewell; I have been delighted to have been at last year's pantomime also in St Matthew's Hall; and, of course, it was a pleasure meeting the Superioress General of the Daughters of Charity, Sister Evelyne Franc, just a few years ago again at the headquarters of St Joseph's Service in Rosewell, along with Sister Sarah, the Provincial at the time.

Conclusion:

Great challenges faced the Sisters when they first came here in 1924; perhaps even greater challenges faced the Sisters, their members of staff and the many residents some 10 years ago when 'Care in the Community' came into operation; and now further challenges face everyone associated with St Joseph's Service, as again we look to the future.

However, St Joseph, the head of the Holy Family, along with Mary and Jesus, have safeguarded everyone associated with Rosewell since 1924. I assure you that our heavenly patrons will not let us down – just as the Daughters of Charity and all of the many helpers associated with St Joseph's Service have not let anyone down in the past.

We look confidently to the future and hope and pray that everything that is to be provided in the future will be something that helps each individual person to grow and develop in the very best way possible according to their needs.

May God indeed reward everyone here and all associated with St Joseph's, Rosewell and St Joseph's Service as we work together for the good of those very loving and precious people entrusted to our care.