

FUNERAL MASS OF FATHER TOM RHATIGAN

ST PHILOMENA'S, WINCHBURGH

MONDAY 2 JUNE 2008

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY CARDINAL O'BRIEN

We gather today to say farewell to the mortal remains of a much loved priest in our Archdiocese.

Father Rhatigan, as you know, was born and educated in Ireland and ordained in St Kieran's, Kilkenny for our Archdiocese in 1947. He fulfilled various appointments in our Archdiocese and spent three years at Cambridge University from 1948 until 1951 in the company of Bishop Patrick Walsh, the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Down and Connor in Ireland, who is happily with us today. He was Chaplain at the Good Shepherd Convent in Edinburgh, engaging in a variety of social works, especially connected with St Andrew's Children's Society. Following on a spell at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, he was successively parish priest of Loanhead, St Mary's, Stirling and Holy Cross, as well as here in Winchburgh, where he was so happy in his retirement.

Obviously, it is only a relatively short time ago that we gathered here with family, friends and many local people of all denominations to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Father Tom's Ordination to the Priesthood.

He was a faithful friend to myself and to many other priests and bishops and, consequently, it is also a privilege to welcome today Bishop Vincent Logan, the Bishop of Dunkeld and brought up in nearby Bathgate.

Many people will miss his warm presence and his sound advice, as well as the sight of that tall, stooping and loving figure at the funerals of many of our priests in recent years, assisting from the pews, rather than concelebrating because of his increasingly poor sight.

As well as thanking and expressing the sincere sympathy of all in our Archdiocese to close family and friends, especially to his 3 brothers, Paddy, Jim and Father Ned, I take this opportunity of thanking in a very special way, Miss Margaret O'Hare, who dedicated the recent years of his life to loving care for Father Tom.