

We are gathered today to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass for a much loved family member, a fellow bishop, a priest and shepherd who has given much to all of us, and of course to this diocese particularly devoted and unselfish service. To the members of his family, his seven nieces and five nephews, those with us here today, and the many others and friends unable to be with us, we offer our sincere condolences, and the firm assurance of our prayers; and indeed we offer these, not only for the repose of his soul, but for that also of all the deceased members of his family; for he would not have wanted it otherwise. A very humble and unassuming man, his first thoughts would be for others rather than himself. So, we unite them all in our prayers today in St Joseph's which he himself chose when appointed as Ordinary to this diocese of Menevia, as his Cathedral Church. Isaiah, in today's first reading, speaks of the wonder of the Kingdom of Heaven in terms of a banquet, with some very fine wine. Bishop Daniel, who occasionally liked a glass with a meal, after so many years of devoted service to the Church, is - we pray - enjoying that banquet and is, no doubt, advising on the quality of the wine provided there, reminding everyone perhaps that of all the Italian wines, the Chianti of Tuscany where he loved spending so many of his holidays, matures and blossoms best of all Italian wines. Well, the promise which that kingdom offers of joy and repose in the presence, for eternity, of the Father who loves us in his Son is the very purpose of our lives and, for one who gave himself in the most unselfish and generous way we pray today that what is held out to us all, is now indeed a reality for him.

The first sentence of our second reading "Now I have something to tell your elders: I am an elder myself, and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and with you I have a share in the glory that is to be revealed," could not more aptly describe one who, having been consecrated a bishop in 1970, was in fact the longest serving bishop in England and Wales. For the whole of that span of forty nine years, he did his utmost to follow the demands made by Peter, in that very passage, of those called to be elders and leaders of the people of God, the Apostles and their successors: watching over the flock, not simply as a duty but gladly, because God wants it; not for sordid money, but because they were eager to do it.

Humble people are often reluctant to accept high office because they know only too well their own unworthiness and inadequacy, and there is a sense in which it can be by compulsion that some accept and enter into Christian service; a way of accepting office and of fulfilling it as if it was a grim and unpleasant duty, so making the whole action a drudge. Not Peter's idea of service; he does not say that people should be conceitedly or irresponsibly eager for high office, but that all Christians should be anxious to render such service as they can, even if fully aware how unworthy they are. I never heard Bishop Daniel complain or moan about the task which God had given him, from such an early age, as bishop.

I am sure you will all have read his biography, but let us hear some of it again: Donal Mullins was born in Kilfinane, County Limerick, on the 10th July 1929. He was the son of Timothy and Mary and brother of Canon Eddie Joe, and the late Bernie, Eileen and Tadhg.

He was educated in Mount Mellery, Waterford, St. Mary's College, Aberystwyth & Cardiff University where he gained a double First-class BA honours degree in Welsh,

a language he loved greatly; this, I am told, often showed itself in the fact that he enjoyed wandering around markets where Welsh was spoken; but when he tried to converse with Welsh speaking parishioners, many of them to his sadness tried to avoid it, as they felt his Welsh was too classical and elevated in comparison with theirs. Indeed, his knowledge and love of the language and history were such that he was elected a Bard of the Welsh Gorsedd. He, in conjunction with the Carmelite, Father John Fitzgerald and others did the new translation of the Roman Missal. When the text had gone to The Vatican for approval before publication, one day he was surprised to receive a copy of it from them, asking him to vet it as a faithful translation. Well, he did!

Welsh history, the survival of the language and culture were essential concepts for him; and he had an absolute conviction that should all parishes in Wales collapse, St David's Pembroke, the Seat of Dewi Sant must survive. As some of you may be aware, a wonderful tribute to him was made, on Twitter, a medium he knew little about, by Hugh Edwards, the Newsreader and commentator: it reads; One of the most impressive figures I ever met, Bishop Daniel Mullins was a man of exceptional integrity, intelligence and humility. He made a great contribution to Wales and to the Christian tradition. Coffa arbennig o dda amdano. In English, I have particularly good remembrance of him.

He studied for the priesthood at St. Mary's College, Oscott in Birmingham and was ordained priest on 12 April 1953. He served in many parishes as a Priest in the Archdiocese of Cardiff, was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese, and on the 5th of February 1970 was named Auxiliary Bishop of Cardiff and Titular Bishop of Sidnacestre. His family were, naturally delighted and very proud that he was made a bishop; but he calmly said "I'll always be Uncle Donie to the children" and, indeed he was. His niece Nora told me: Family was everything to him He always kept up the Irish tradition of visiting relations every time he came home. He had a genuine interest in us all and always knew and remembered what each one of us was doing. He was always very good to us but practical at the same time in what he gave. He always seemed to sense what we needed. His consecration to the Episcopate took place on 1 April 1970. In 1987 the Holy Father, Saint John Paul, entrusted him with the task of looking after the newly re-formed Diocese of Menevia. The first of that name was in fact the first Welsh See at the Restoration of the Hierarchy, Newport and Menevia. Bishop Daniel Mullins settled to it with love and complete dedication. But at a time when he was busiest, he was diagnosed with cancer, and suffered greatly under treatment; nevertheless he remained serene and continued with apparent undiminished energy. Among his proudest achievements was the role he played in the foundation of the Cistercian Sisters Monastery in Whitland, very conscious of the role the Order played in Pre-Reformation Welsh History. He retired to Kidwelly, to live in a house he had had built, with the intention of leaving it to his beloved housekeeper Sylvia at his imminent death; but, to his great sorrow, she died before him. He eventually moved to Waungron residential Home, very near to Whitland Abbey, where the staff cared very lovingly for him. He said he could not be happier and felt very blessed to be able to attend Mass at the nearby Monastery.

As Headmaster of Belmont, I knew **of** him, and knew him slightly; but what I do remember are his complimentary remarks on how good he felt the education of

Catholic boys was at Belmont; they kept their faith. As Abbot of Belmont, I got to know him much better; the Abbey ran the City Centre parish of St David's, Swansea. I remember that in the various moves I made of our priests on parishes, I had to replace its parish priest, whom he felt was excellent, only to send him back there when his replacement fell ill. On the first of November 2000, having just been told the day before by the Nuncio that I was to be his Coadjutor, and take over the diocese from him, I rang him to make an appointment to see him. Concerned that I might be telling him I wanted to move that priest again, he was quite curt with me, as he could on occasion be; and he said: "what is it you want Father Abbot?" When I answered "well, it's actually something you asked the Holy Father for" his tone changed immediately, he said "my dear Mark, come for lunch tomorrow!". Which of course I did!

I am sure Daniel Mullins followed Christ's admonition in today's Gospel "Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest." A very quiet and devout man of simple taste, who was indeed overburdened and suffered greatly; although a scholar he never made a show of it; he accepted God's revealed truth in the simplest and most genuine way and trusted in the Lord. He has now surely met God face to face, and rejoices in that beatific vision to which we all aspire. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.