

A Letter to My Mother

Fr Vincent Sherlock, parish priest of Tubbercurry, writes a tribute to his mother for his May article.



Were you still with us, you would have received a letter (and cheque) from the President today! You have been gone nearly fourteen years. So instead of a letter from Áras an Uachtaráin, maybe you'll accept a few lines from the youngest lad!

Just over seventy years ago you and Bill were married. I never recall seeing a photo of you on your wedding day, but there is one that was taken the next day. If there was a daughter in our house, we might know the answer to that!

I really cannot recall my first mem-

ory of you. Isn't that strange? You, my mother, and I cannot recall when I first saw you, but I know for certain you saw me and loved me. Sometimes when I speak with children preparing for their First Holy Communion, I tell them about you and the memory I have of my First Holy Communion Day. I don't recall the church, the priest or the first time I received Eucharist. I remember you getting me ready for Mass. I remember putting on the clothes that you had bought for me. You put a blue kitchen coat on me to keep the boy and the clothes clean

So, one hundred years on I am so thankful you were born. I am blessed that you met Bill and gave the gift of life to us all. I remember your laugh, your smile and how much you enjoyed me telling a story that would make people laugh.

until departure!

You and Bill were a great pair, and you did your best for all of us. Most of my memories are of us on the road, collecting and delivering cars, often late at night or early in the morning. There were no strict bedtime rules in Moygara – if there were, I don't remember them. I don't ever remember being tired or hungry though, so the mother in you kept the balance for us that was needed.

When I started to serve Mass, you brought me to Mullaney's in Sligo, and John Mullaney helped you as you got a soutane and surplice for me. I know you were proud of that and happy that I was serving Mass. I am not sure when I thought about becoming a priest but that soutane and surplice were important to me and to you.

My first suit was for my Confirmation Day, blue and double-breasted. The next was in 1981, we went to John Mullaney again to buy a black suit as I prepared to go to Maynooth. It's strange, you had a lot to do with clothing me, preparing me for moments in

life – steps on the road. Thanks.

We were always in touch, thank God. I went from being the passenger in the car to being the driver, and we covered a lot of road. I often remember and mention those times I would be at home and settled, only to hear you say, 'We will go up to Dwyers for an hour' or some other named relation, and it would have been the last thing I wanted to do. We would go and not once did I regret it. You valued relations and friends, kept links alive, and I am glad you did. Most nights your name would pop up on my phone screen and no matter where I was or who I was with, I answered – sometimes reluctantly, but I missed those calls when you went.

So, one hundred years on I am so thankful you were born. I am blessed that you met Bill and gave the gift of life to us all. I remember your laugh, your smile and how much you enjoyed me telling a story that would make people laugh. You knew the story, word for word, but listened for the ending as if you had never

heard it before. You encouraged me and shaped me.

The day you died, I was called to the nursing home. I remember you in the bed, the candles beside you. Just like I am not clear on the first time I saw you, I am not clear on this last time. I don't know if you heard me pray for and love you, but I do know you would be happy I was there. I am happy I was there and always, always glad that you were here for all of us.

*Remembered and loved,
Vincent*

