

Olive Lydia Folland

*“He will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more”*

+ In the name of God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Olive had such bright, youthful eyes. In their kind gaze though, one could detect something of the great losses she experienced in her long, happy life. This is what first struck me when I met our beloved Olive.

When she became unwell it was my privilege to visit Olive, and once to celebrate the Eucharist with her in her Heavitree home. This is where I began to appreciate the richness of her life, and the depth of her faith. We heard in the Tribute Olive's own words commending her meaningful relationships, sharing her valued experiences, and faithfully declaring her commitment to the Church.

On one occasion Olive delighted to share with me a treasured photograph of her father, kept in her bedroom. She spoke of looking forward to meeting him

in heaven. We imagined together what happy embrace that would be; and all the things she had saved up to share with him on earth would be met with his fatherly smile and strength in heaven.

For Olive was not timid in talking about death, in talking about her sure and certain hope of the promises of heaven. In talking with her about the funeral of her first husband Victor, and of her second husband Arthur, and that of her beloved brother Gordon, she felt in her heart they were waiting for her in heaven - waiting to welcome her home again.

Neither was Olive timid in ringing the bell in this church, in all the right places and at all the right times for our worship. This same bell was rung 97times before this service to honour the 97years of her life.

In our Bible reading from the book of Revelation, read by Fr. David Hastings, we heard a vision of a new heaven and earth, coming down out of heaven, prepared by God as a bride adorned for her husband. Olive knew well this great metaphor for the love and healing power God for His good creation.

Often we ask ourselves, faced with the hurt, the sadness, and the injustice in the world around us - “what can we do to help?” How can we participate in what God declared in the Bible reading: His declaration that He will find His home among mortals, wipe every tear from their eyes, and make crying and pain to be no more?

Well, as Olive did, so does the Holy City of Jerusalem - we too can marry. For the love of two people in marriage changes the world. Their love grows and overflows into their children and grandchildren, their friends and

neighbours, and brings healing and hope to the ends of the earth.

We who are gathered here, Ann and John, and all Olive's friends and family, may long for the pain of our mourning to pass. We may long for all things to be made new, and vibrant again. We may long for God, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, to comfort us as His treasured children.

Trying to bearing the loss of Olive from our lives, we offer comfort to one another today.

For we are inheritors of a world blessed by the overflowing love of Olive's union with Victor, and latterly Arthur; we are inheritors of a world being healed by the overflowing of love of God in Christ's union with His creation.

We have the boldness to bring our fears and doubts before God because, in Jesus Christ, He has already taken all things to Himself on the cross. And by the blessed mystery of the cross, passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all who have died may be overwhelmed with abundant life and heavenly love.

When we sang Happy Birthday to Olive after the Mass in this church on her 97th birthday, she declared to everyone, with those bright, youthful eyes shining that “they’re not ready for me up there yet”! For you Olive, the new heaven and new earth has now been made ready. Help God prepare a place for us all.

“Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord.”

Amen.

The New Heaven and the New Earth

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also

he said, “Write this, for these words are

trustworthy and true.” ⁶ Then he said to me,

“It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the

water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

