

**FUNERAL OF JAKE FRANCIS-JONES**  
**Isaiah 25: 6 – 9    Romans 8: 31 – 35    Matthew 5: 1 – 12**  
**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

With the death of anybody, there is always pain and sadness for those who are left behind. Our sympathy and prayers go out to Diana, Jamie and Maxwell, Bronwyn – Jake's sister, and Jake's six grandchildren, Humphrey, Emily and Camilla, and Tessa, Anabel and Lucy. We no longer have in our midst someone brought so much vitality, help, understanding, care and friendship to us. A great number of us have gathered here this afternoon to remember Jake and to pray for the repose of his soul. We pray that he will now rest in peace after his declining health these last few years and the pain he suffered. A great number of us have gathered here because in different ways we were touched by Jake's friendship, compassion and care. Jake reached out to very many and it is right that we should be here and pray for him. In my thoughts and prayers for Jake over the last few days, I think I would sum up my friendship with him and his wonderful work by saying he always wanted the best for others; we all know how he put himself out for so many.

Amidst our grief and sadness, let us take both comfort and hope in the Word of God that we've just listened to. The prophet Isaiah urges us to look beyond the immediate. Amidst our everyday preoccupations and worries, it is difficult to give time and thought to life beyond the immediate. The prophet gives us a beautiful picture of the eternal banquet where we will partake in a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines. We're urged by the prophet to put our hope in him, in God, he will save us. (Is 25: 6 – 9)

Again, St Paul in his letter to the Romans reminds us to place our hope in the love and mercy of God's love. God gave us his Son, who gave his life for us, so that we might partake of eternal life with him. His life was a life of selfless love for each one of us, and it is that selfless love that we remember at each mass. St Paul writes, 'I am certain of this: neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nothing already in existence and nothing still to come, nor any power, nor the heights nor the depths, nor any created thing whatever, will be able to come between us and the love of God, known to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Rom 8: 38 – 39)

In the gospel passage of the Beatitudes, at the start of the Sermon of the Mount, we have a picture of how we should live and reach out to others. It is a challenging and difficult programme to follow, and it is so different from what the world demands of us. Jesus turns everything upside down and calls us to have humility, compassion, gentleness, mercy and to bring peace to all situations. Amidst our aims of life, we're called to desire and strive for the goodness and the love of God in our hearts. We all know that this is a lifetime's work.

We know how Jake spent many years working to help others in the Old Gregorian family who were experiencing difficulties in life. Many, many Od Gregorians turned to him for support and friendship; he was a listening ear for so many. But far more than that, it was not just words, it was action. He put in place support systems and got others to assist him in helping him with those really experiencing difficulties. A few years ago, when I was explaining to our Chileans friends in Chile about St Gregory's Society, and the different dinners and get togethers across the world that the Society organised, what moved them most was the Bruised Reeds: how the Society recognised that we were human beings, with our faults, and how we were in need of support, help and friendship. It was one OG who set this up – our

Jake – whom we're praying for this afternoon. As we reflect on Jake's wonderful work in reaching out to others, we also remember Diana who supported and helped him.

In 2014, St Gregory's Society decided to have an Old Gregorian Medal, to recognise the out of the ordinary work an Old Gregorian had carried out. It came as no surprise that the first recipient of this honour was Jake. The citation ran as follows:

*For his outstanding contribution to St Gregory's Society by single-handedly keeping everyone in touch for many years with news and comment. His tireless devotion to OGs who are experiencing adversity or are suffering, known as Bruised Reeds, is also a remarkable legacy of his work and utilises the power of network to help others.*

*Let us pray –*

*Saints of God, come to his aid!  
Hasten to meet him angels of the Lord!*

*May Christ, who called you, take you to himself;  
may angels lead you to the bosom of Abraham.*

*Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon him*