

Homily – Fay Pankhurst Memorial Service - 24 January 2017

Today in the Church we recall the lives of three of the companions of St Paul, Timothy, Titus and Silas. These three young men were at the forefront of Paul's missionary endeavour. They followed on from that first generation of Christians and so established this great pattern of handing on the faith, a handing on that has continued to this very day. Fay has been a part a part of that in the way in which she lived and died. She was clearly enormously creative and she has handed on her love of the creative arts and some of the fruits of her labour. But what is the heart of the Christian faith that we hand on – what is its rationale? I think that perhaps it is self-giving. I am sure many of you know the text from John's gospel 'greater love has no one, than to give their lives for their friends.' Ultimately this is what it is all about.

Early last week I sat with Fay's son Paul and we chatted about his Mum Fay, about her life and the things she cherished. We spoke of the Knitting Club at the Dickson Library, her Tuesday Coffee group, eating out at the Hellenic Club and of course her involvement with St Philip's, an involvement that began around the time St Philip's was founded over 50 odd years ago. But most importantly her involvement with Pandora's, our boutique!

I haven't actually asked who named it Pandora's, I am still rather new around O'Connor. After all Pandora in Greek mythology opened a box and, released all the evils of humanity; I am sure that is not the intent of our Pandoras shop. What I would like us to consider today is the Greek name 'Pandora.' It is two words pan meaning 'all' and doron meaning 'gift' or 'giving.' So Pandora means 'all giving' and this is the rationale behind our boutique; it is about giving and Fay was clearly very much a part of that.

Fay's giving has been spoken of this morning in many different ways by Samantha although I barely knew her I could see it was in her nature even through her frailty and confusion at the conclusion of her life. Even in her passing Fay has been 'gift' offering of herself so that others may have life. This is perhaps the greatest vocation of the Christian epitomised in Fay and today we give thanks as we remember her and entrust her to God's eternal keeping.