

FUNERAL MASS OF MONSIGNOR DAVID GEMMELL

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, EDINBURGH

MONDAY 17 MARCH 2008

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY CARDINAL KEITH PATRICK O'BRIEN

Just two weeks ago on Sunday 2nd March at 8.30 am my telephone rang. It was David who was phoning me and these were his words: "Wasn't that a fantastic night last night?"; "And you were absolutely great!"

David was referring to the previous evening's opening recital of our new organ and to my own part in delivering welcoming speeches to the distinguished guests at a reception before the recital began; and to words which I made to the packed audience in our Cathedral.

I want to apply them now to this Funeral Mass asking God's intercession and praying for the happy repose of the soul of David. I ask each one of you to imagine David now speaking to you with regard to his life, especially his priestly life, and what he would say to us, not as a huge congregation but to each one of us as an individual.

"What a fantastic life I have had; and what a wonderful priesthood!" And still looking at each one of us as an individual he would go on to say: "And **YOU** were absolutely great!"

David must now realise just what a fantastic life he has had – and what a fantastic priesthood. He must realise just how much he has affected so many people and he would give us the praise saying to us:

"You were absolutely great!"

I ask you to take those words which I have put into David's mouth to heart this morning as we commend him to the loving mercy of Our Father in Heaven. He has had a wonderful life and priesthood – and each one of us has had an "absolutely" great part to play in that life.

I mention in particular of course each member of his family gathered here today to join us in prayer. And in particular I hear David say to Josephine, his mother: "What a fantastic life, dad and you gave to me, mum; what a wonderful way you formed me so that I have been able to help so many others in my priesthood; you have been in a very, very special way absolutely great; I can only repay you and all of the family with my love from Heaven!"

Realising that David was called to the Lord suddenly away from home with Hugh, one of his close priest friends, we thank his family and all who loved him and cared for him. We thank in a very special way those who were responsible for his medical care, especially in recent months, including all the authorities in Spain, who saw to the safe return home of his body.

We now commend him lovingly to Our Lord, asking forgiveness of all his sins and praying too for forgiveness for our own past failures.