



**Homily for the Memorial Mass of**  
**Mr. Christian Brown OBE KSG MOC**

**25 June 2018**

**Cardiff Cathedral**

**Archbishop George Stack**

When I was young, I was taught that you learn how to pray with the bible in one hand and the newspaper (or perhaps today the internet) in the other. One purpose of prayer is to try to bring together the different worlds which we occupy, the different worlds in which we live. The life of each person is lived on many different levels and many different ways. The image we project to the outside world. The view people have of us in public and professionally often so different to the inner landscape of our lives. All the hopes and aspirations, all the nervousness and burdens which we carry within. In our prayer, in the silence of our heart, we ‘allow’ the Revelation of God, the Word of God who is Jesus Christ, to shine on every corner of our lives. In that way the His story, the History of Salvation, becomes my story as it is written in the book of my life.

That is why the bible readings chosen for Christian’s Memorial Mass invite us to look with fresh insight on the life of this extraordinary person. The reading from the Old Testament Book of the Wisdom sets the scene:

*“Length of years is not what makes age honourable,  
Nor number of years the true measure of life”.*

How we wish that were not true when we think of the sudden death of Christian. All that energy and enthusiasm, that zest for life and dedication and commitment to whatever cause he championed. How we wish we could have had him for so many years longer because, as the Scriptures say:

*“People look on uncomprehending;*

*It does not enter their heads*

*That grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord”.*

Although Christian would probably guffaw at the next sentence, there is truth in the words:

*“Coming to perfection in so short a time, he achieved a long life”.*

Somebody wrote that Christian lived life in the fast lane. The list of his achievements and his joy in life, his dedication to the work of charity in all its forms and his extraordinary “can do” attitude, meant that he achieved more in his 53 years than many of us do living life in the slower lane.

The Gospel of Matthew gives us the scene of the final judgment and teaches that judgment will ask the degree to which we used our time and talents and energy for the good of others. The wise servants recognised the generosity of their master and used their talents well (not pounds as in the unfortunate translation). *“Look, with the one talent you gave me I have made ten. With the one talent you gave me, I have made five”*. With the £1.1million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for which Christian was responsible look what he made. He created a lasting monument not to himself but to the work of the Church in Cardiff and beyond for the glory of God and the well-being of the community – not just Catholics but all who come here in good times and in bad. *“The Music in Hospitals”* charity which he particularly loved is symbolic of the potential for good which is being realised in The Cornerstone and elsewhere.

*“You say to me you have faith but have no good works .... Prove to me you have faith without any good deeds to show ... Faith is like that: If good works do not go with it, it is quite dead”* said St. James. Christian had faith in bundles. He believed in the Church and all it stands for and was deep in his devotion. He believed in people. All that inner belief spilled out in good works, not out of a sense of duty or self-importance, but simply because of his conviction that *“The Glory of God is humanity fully alive”* (St. Irenaeus. 2<sup>nd</sup>

century). But faith also demands that you believe in yourself and that you experience the faith of others. They say that behind every successful man there stands a surprised woman. Christian's wife Monica may occasionally have been surprised but was an unfailing support to Christian in his many schemes and plans. "The still point in a turning world" as T. S. Eliot would have it. We thank her for that. To Monica and to Gabriel we offer our sympathy and prayers at this sad time, but also our thanks for making it possible for Christian to be so generous with his time and talent and energy for others.

"Rest" may not be the immediate word that comes to mind with Christian, even on a day like today. But we do pray that he may "Rest in Peace" after his labours and "Rise in Glory" as he always wished for others. Amen.

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