

Dear Members of Gerard's family, Dear Friends of Gerard, and Dear Colleagues,

I am certain that none of us would ever have anticipated that we would be offering this memorial Mass for our beloved Gerard Mannion. At 48, he would have at least another 30 years to share his life and love with his family and friends, complete his many research projects, serve the church faithfully, and enrich the academy, especially Georgetown University and its students. It is in the nature of things that the younger bury the older, and not the other way round. Tragically, Saturday, September 21, 2019 broke that natural law, and Gerard was taken away from us, suddenly and unexpectedly.

The news of his death must have been a thunderbolt to his two sisters Maria and Julie, his extended family, and to Mandy, his life partner. To each of you we present our deepest condolences and our prayers that God's grace will console and sustain you in your immense grief and mourning. I myself received the news of Gerard's passing while I was in Germany on Wednesday, September 25, at 2:00 AM local time. I immediately contacted Gerard's friends to let them know of the tragedy and they were all stunned and devastated.

This is not a eulogy in the literal sense of the word, a speech that sings the praises of someone, typically someone who has just died. Liturgy is not the appropriate venue for it nor would there be enough time to mention all of Gerard's outstanding professional achievements as teacher, theologian, scholar, and mover-and-shaker in the ecclesiastical and theological worlds. Rather what I offer is some memories and remembrances of a much-beloved friend by people outside the circle of his immediate family who had the fortune of knowing him.

In the week following Gerard's death I received hundreds of messages from his friends on the six continents expressing their grief over his untimely passing and lamenting the huge loss

for the academy, church, and society. One man who has collaborated closely with Gerard in the Ecclesiological Investigations conferences said that Gerard was the elder brother he never had. Another, miscalculating my age and Gerard's, said that Gerard was like a son to me. Another, gentler to my age, consoled me for my loss of a younger brother. Whether as a son, an elder brother, or a younger sibling, Gerard deeply affected all the people he met with his genuine friendship, kindness, and generosity. That is the Gerard that remains forever in our hearts and memories.

A Dominican who knew Gerard well recalled in his email to me that Gerard had often stated the triple motto that guided his life: First, "Act kindly"; second, "do justice"; and third, "Party your ass off." Those of us who knew Gerard need no proof that he lived by each of these three principles to the fullest, and with equal measure. I am sure that now enjoying the heavenly banquet, where wine and cheese, which was his favorite vegetarian diet, are in abundance, he is networking among the saints on behalf of ecumenical unity, social justice, and his favorite Irish rugby team.

Another friend noted in her message that Gerard once told her that as a young boy, when he heard the prayer for the dead, the phrase "perpetual light" sounded wonderful to him. "Perpetual light" brought joy and warmth to Gerard's heart in his cold, cloudy, and rainy native land, and even at Cambridge and Oxford, where he obtained his undergraduate degree and his doctorate respectively. "Perpetual Light" is God's grace and love that was poured into his mind and heart as he grew up in his Christian and Catholic faith. "Perpetual Light" is the gift of knowledge and love he generously shared with his students and colleagues. "Perpetual Light" is no other than God, the creator of light and the conqueror of darkness, who has saved the world through his Son Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit. For Gerard who has known and loved

this Triune God we pray: "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him." Gerard Michael Joseph Patrick Mannion, rest in peace, till we meet again.