

5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

## Marriage

**"I'm getting married in the morning,  
Ding! Dong! The bells are gonna chime.  
Pull out the stopper; let's have a whopper;  
But get me to the church on time"**

*Alan Jay Learner, My Fair Lady*

When Penny came to our hospice, we learned that Oliver, her husband, had been in a Care Home with dementia for a long time and was now very poorly. After a few days, we were devastated to hear that Oliver had died. Penny was too ill to attend his funeral, so she asked me to sit with her while the service was taking place. When the designated time for Oliver's funeral arrived, I wasn't sure what I should be doing. Pray? Read a funeral service? Share Scripture? Have a cup of tea?

So I heard myself asking, "How long you were married, Penny?" "Sixty-two years last month," she replied. I was silent for a bit then said, "I'll bet you can remember your wedding day as if it was yesterday." And I got the *whole* story ... meeting Oliver at a barn-dance; courtship in the fields round the farm; marriage in the minister's manse ("Big church weddings were no' for the likes o' us."); a sister and brother as witnesses; proud parents; a big spread in the farmhouse; merriment into the wee small hours; the colour of her bouquet; flowers in her hair; a handsome husband; a happy farming community. She even started to recount the events of her wedding night in the back-room of the farmhouse – but stopped herself just in time. And through the whole time of her husband's funeral service she never once stopped smiling broadly. Sixty-two years on, she was reliving her wedding day. Sharing the happy memories it evoked helped her cope in her time of sorrow and loss.

Today is my wedding anniversary. I have no doubt Mary and I will spend some time today immersed in memories of our wedding day, and much more besides. And I know we'll both be smiling broadly too.

### **A prayer for today**

*Loving God, for love in a marriage; for the depth of any loving relationship; for the warm memories of love wherever we've found it ... we give you thanks. Amen*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

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