

7th June 2026

Appreciation

**"The way to develop the best in anyone
is by appreciation and encouragement."**

Charles Schwab, The Irish Digest (1965)

Agnes was an elderly spinster who had been a regular church attender all her life. She's continued to live in the family home after her parents died, and now, aged ninety-three, she was housebound and cared for by a phalanx of carers of one sort or another. Her Edinburgh apartment ("Not a 'flat', dear. That sounds so tawdry ...") was immaculate – Agnes made sure that those in the "domestic" section of her carer-crew did their job well. And even in her frailer years she remained welcoming and hospitable. ("A small refreshment, Mr Gordon? A snifter of Sherry perhaps? And a finger of shortbread? I got them in specially ...")

Agnes got flowers from the church every couple of months. I was told by those who took them round to her "apartment" that they sometimes felt awkward, not sure what to say or whether there was much appreciation for their visit. But "Agnes is Agnes", was the way we all coped.

I visited Agnes one day when she was poorly and bedbound. During our conversation, she asked me if I could fetch her hairbrush from the dressing-table drawer. I found the brush, and as I was lifting it from the drawer, I saw that next to it was a bundle of little cards, tied with red ribbon. I recognised the top one. It was the card from the church that accompanied the home-delivery of flowers. "From your Church friends. Always in our prayers. God bless you." And beneath that, there were twenty or so cards in the neat, ribbon-tied bundle.

When I gave Agnes her hairbrush, I commented, "I see you keep the flower-cards, Agnes." And before I could continue with the "Why?" of my thought process, Agnes interrupted. "I do indeed," she whispered. "For every time I get the church flowers and a card, my spirits are lifted. To be prayed for, to be remembered, still to be included in Church life, that matters a lot, you know. The flowers are just *so* much appreciated."

"So much appreciated"? You can be sure that those who regularly took the church flowers to Agnes heard about that, and you can be sure that they were greatly encouraged by such sincere appreciation.

A prayer for today

Appreciate! Appreciate! Thank you! Thank you! That's it! Amen