

Duffy insists funeral videos are on the rise

Local videographer Gerry says tapes are growing in popularity

By James Rogers

IT'S one of the most difficult experiences of our lives to lose a loved one but in recent times more and more people are choosing to document this traumatic time in their lives through video with local videographer Gerry Duffy one of the pioneers of the new service.

Gerry, whose studio is located in Thomas Street, Dundalk, insists that more and more people are turning to him to film their loved ones' funerals as a means of paying tribute to them, allowing people who can't make the Mass to share the experience and to help with the grieving process.

While the idea might not be to everyone's liking,

Gerry says it is becoming more and more common although he admitted that he fell into the idea almost by accident.

He said: "It developed as a natural progression of life. I've been 33 years filming weddings primarily and in some instances parents get you back in to film the arrival of the baby home, the christening and so on. As the family's lives progress with you, you get involved with christenings, communions and confirmations and in one particular incident just over 12 years ago the child that I'd got to know didn't make it to confirmation stage.

"Shortly after I'd recorded her communion she passed away with meningitis and to me it



● Gerry Duffy

was life changing because the parents asked me to get involved in recording that celebration of her life, one as a passage of video that people could touch with the moments in her life when they arrived to pay their respects and two the celebration of her funeral within the living room of the home itself.

"That progressed on then to other people who had heard of it and grief is a very strange thing. People almost tend to shy away when you mention funeral and video in the

same breath. I'm involved in a networking group called BNI in Dundalk and if you mention funeral videos at a networking meeting you can literally see peoples' reactions."

Despite that Gerry says that funeral videos are becoming more and more frequent for him.

"We would've done 140 to 150 in total and last year was an incredible year for it because of the volcanic ash issue. It meant that hundreds of funerals were touched with the secondary grief in that brothers and sisters couldn't get home to parents funerals.

"I had one lady who contacted me who wanted her husband's funeral recorded because his first wife couldn't get home from Canada and she wanted it recorded so that his first family could be part of his passing."

Gerry insists though that the whole process is handled very tastefully.

"It's all done very discreetly. People have this imagery of cameras in

the graveyard and chasing hearses but that's not what happens. It's literally the Mass.

"It's a celebration of life. If you've been touched by a funeral in your own family, you very quickly forget all that was said and you also forget who was there and that's the reason that funeral directors and undertakers are now encouraging families to look at that moment as a very large moment in the family's history and bring in a professional who will work discreetly and totally unobserved.

"People probably won't view it for two, three or four months afterwards and for some people it might be 12 months before they get around to watch it but it's a courageous moment to press play on a DVD player and relive that celebration but it's a crutch that helps them through their grief," he said.

For further information on Gerry's funeral videos, visit his website www.gerryduffy.ie or call him on 087-2586400.

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