



Chris Cotter - Recording

Chris Cotter Eulogy (via a recording)

One of Gerard's favourite passages of scripture was from the Gospel of John: "I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Gerard was all about life. Sometimes it seemed that life was all about Gerard, but that's another matter. Gerard's desire that *all* could share in Jesus' promise of living the fullest, richest life possible drove him forward as a teacher, teacher educator, leader, and most importantly as a friend and as a husband and parent.

Gerard did not understand this text to mean living a hedonistic life – although, as many can attest, he certainly enjoyed a party and knew how to celebrate. For Gerard, 'having abundant life' was about human flourishing: creating the conditions for people to be 'fully alive human beings', embracing all the joys and all the sufferings of being human. Gerard knew and understood the wider context of John 10:10. Jesus is the "good shepherd" (John 10:14) who knows the sheep and lays down his life for them. Like Jesus, Gerard had no time for the thieves, bandits and hired help who were thoughtless, destructive or ran away in the face of danger. Gerard was always striving to 'be more' for others. For Gerard, to 'be more' meant recognizing ones' own God given gifts and developing these gifts into strengths for the service of others. Likewise, he always sought to create the conditions for others to 'be more' for others. In his shepherding of others, Gerard was a force of nature. He was for the most part, blunt, direct, unsubtle, purposeful, competitive, supremely confident, voluble, energetic, fun, fierce and relentless. He had high expectations of himself and others. His fearsomeness and fearlessness could put some people off. And sometimes even Gerard would admit privately that he needed to be 'managed'. Gerard also knew that some people needed *more* time and *more* support, or *more* love than others, to meet those high expectations. These were often the especially difficult and challenging students in schools. This was Gerard's mission as a disciple: to 'be more' for others, especially for the outsiders, the lost and broken ones. Gerard wanted our classrooms and schools to be true to their mission: to create the conditions for every person to be a fully alive human being, for every young person to be listened to and known and, in turn, to make a contribution to the common good.

Gerard's ferocious desire to imitate the good shepherd, to have an impact so that others might flourish, was grounded in his human experience of being loved and loving in return. Gerard knew he was loved. He received love through his family: through Marie and Frank, and Chris, Mark and Paul, and especially through Suzie. Suzie and Gerard's love for each

other brought Ella and Lucy into this world. Gerard knew that the source of all love is our God, who is love. The love that moves the heavens and the stars is what energised Gerard in his life and work. This same love gave Gerard the grace to embrace his illness and death with honesty and humility. And we are all so much richer and so much more alive because of it.