

Family get €560k over mother's sepsis death

By Helen Bruce

THE family of a woman who died after a hysterectomy have settled a High Court case for €560,000.

Linda Royal, aged 50, developed sepsis after surgery at Dublin's Mount Carmel Hospital, the court heard.

Desmond O'Neill SC, for the woman's family, said Mrs Royal had been referred to consultant gynaecologist Mona Joyce in March 2008 following a prolapsed bladder.

Dr Joyce said a hysterectomy should be carried out, which was done on September 22.

The family were advised this was 'a very routine operation', the court was told.

But Mr O'Neill said that Mrs



Tragic: Linda Royal was 50

Royal became septic. He said: 'It carried on for a number of days without being noticed.'

'On the 26th, she went into organ failure. The defendants

thought it was a type of constipation, and for another two days she was in the hospital, and then she was transferred to St James's Hospital for an operation [a laparotomy].

'Once she was operated on they could see that she was in organ failure.'

Mrs Royal's condition deteriorated, and she died in St James's, Dublin, at just after 7pm on September 29, 2008.

Her children were aged 24, 22 and 12 at the time of her death.

Mrs Royal, of Tallaght, Dublin, also had a three-month-old granddaughter, the court heard.

Her son Keith took a case on behalf of the family against Mount Carmel Medical Group and Dr Joyce. Liability was not admitted in the case.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Maisie's spirit will live on in the inspiration she gave others

IT was before dawn when I posted these lines on my website: 'The autumn leaf displays the true majesty of old age. This is beauty crafted in paradise, a reminder that we too can shine with grace as day turns to night'. Soon after, I received a text saying 'Maisie Kealy passed away this morning'.

Maisie was a devoted reader of this column and a fervent supporter of the Irish Daily Mail. Recently, she was diagnosed with a terminal disease. As day turned to night, she shone with grace, warmth and rare courage.

Later that day, I was invited by Maisie's family to address mourners at her funeral. I was honoured because, on the few occasions that we met, she lit up my life. During our brief encounters, I could clearly see that this was someone truly special.

Maisie's sparkling smile, her passion and rich sense of fun made a deep impact on me. Add to that her humility, kindness and gentleness and you realised that she passed through this life leaving behind a trail of laughter, love and light.

As we glance across the years, how many of us can say that we have done likewise? How many of us could look death in the face and smile, knowing that we had led a blameless existence?

That, however, is precisely what Maisie did when she heard that her time on this earth was drawing to an end. She gazed back across her long life and smiled. If tears were forbidden, it was because they signify sadness and regret.

Maisie had no reason to feel either sad or regretful. She had lived a life of gentle virtue and goodness, a life devoted to her husband, children and grandchildren. She had seen the world and now it was simply time to depart it.

With sublime serenity, she embraced death as if it were just another of her many journeys. This one, however, would lead her back home into the arms of her beloved husband, Mick, and a dear little daughter who died shortly after birth.

Remarkably, on the day she died, the Gospel passage read: 'Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants'.

When the Master arrived for Maisie, He not only found her ready and waiting but prepared in every way that a human being can possibly be in such circumstances. She waited vigilantly

and when He came she went without a struggle. Just like her life, her death was noble and dignified.

In the end, the greatness of a life cannot be measured by fame or fortune. The true measure is the extent to which that person inspired happiness and joy in others. A genuine legacy that is built to endure is not made of marble or gold but simply of the love that remains in people's hearts long after the person has gone.

Maisie did not leave behind any material riches to speak of. There are no monuments or buildings bearing her name. Much greater than all that, however, is her legacy of gentleness, valour and compassion.

Maisie's monument is something that will remain rooted in all those who knew and loved her. It is a profound sense that we are somehow better off for having met her.

On Saturday, the Church will celebrate the feast of All Saints. It commemorates those who have been formally canonised but also those saintly souls who have passed through this world unnoticed. We all know of such people – those who gave without hope of reward, who loved without limit and who, in their own quiet way, left this world a better place.

I do not hesitate to say that Maisie Kealy was such a person. Without any fanfare, she walked through life inspiring joy and persuading people to feel better about themselves.

HE came, He found her ready and waiting and now she is enjoying her eternal reward. No fear, fuss or regrets. She simply packed her bags, took a final bow and waved farewell.

In dying as she did, Maisie left us a great lesson in how to live. Don't ever despair but simply be humble and happy. Always be of good cheer and never let tears sink a smile. That way, when the end comes, you will have nothing to fear. You will know that 'blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival'.

Maisie was a blessed and faithful servant to her final breath. She asked for little and gave much. And what she gave was something that neither time nor death can corrode.

She proved that to be a saint you don't have to do heroic works. You simply love and laugh as she did, seeking to light up the lives of all who cross your path.

For the first time in a long time, Maisie Kealy will not get to read this column. However, in reading about her life, my hope is that she may light up yours.

If so, the most important thing about her will never die.

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—

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