

Before this service began, we played the Waltz of the Flowers from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite. A few weeks before Mum died I found myself singing this at the top of my voice at home in Norwich even though I'd not heard it for many years. I asked for it to be included today as I remembered how I used to dance to this wonderful music which both Mum and I loved and which was often played in our family home during my early childhood.

This is my tribute to Mum

My Dear Mum

Thank you for being my Mum and thank you with all my heart for your unwavering love for me .

From the time I was 11 there were pain and anguish in our relationship. It started when I began to seek my own place in the world. I know that our different opinions about many things, especially around matters relating to Christianity, caused you great anxiety which led to anger and frustration.

As I grew up we both faced the hurt that came from feelings of loss and separation, both perceived and actual. We were bound by our intense connection with each other while being torn apart by our widely diverging views and conflicting interpretations of our internal worlds within which we sought meaning.

Being the only one in the family not to commit to the Christian faith made my difficulties harder. And, having Christian parents who were so admired and respected by their community placed expectations on me which I had no hope of ever meeting.

When these conflicts came to a head I went to live in Norwich to live my separate life which was so necessary for me. Many years followed during which we both in our separate ways had to learn that our conflicting viewpoints, especially about spiritual issues, could never be reconciled. This in turn led to the slowly healing discovery that love, compassion, kindness and acceptance of our differences were more important than the reassuring sense of unity and security afforded by a shared faith and understanding.

I am so glad that during the last 10 years of your life we found a way to show our love for each other, especially in the last two years after Dad died. After the years you devoted to caring for him, despite the loneliness you felt, you blossomed and were able to enjoy more time with your children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces.

Some of my happiest memories have been during my recent visits to you; taking you out in the wheelchair by the sea, having cups of tea in Lytham (even 'though you struggled to hear) and at home, those special hugs which meant the world to me.

My visits, all the way from Norwich, were always far shorter than I would have wished but it gave me so much pleasure to be with you when I could.

Within you was a love of music and art and a creative flair which other commitments didn't allow you time to fully develop or express but which nonetheless spoke to me of your essence. I recall you telling me you had once wanted to be an actress and I thought, 'Yes Mum, you would have excelled at that. You were so passionate in expressing your views and could always be relied on to add a touch of drama to make your point!

I am sure you passed on to me my love of beauty, music, art and literature which are such an important part of life and expression of my soul.

I shall miss you Mum terribly, it is inconceivable to think of you not being in my life anymore. Thank you dear Mum for the love you gave me during my life; thank you for keeping your heart close to mine. Your love for me and mine for you will remain deep in my heart forever.