

**Rosemary Macdonald**

Funeral Service

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### **Minister's Introduction (Minister, Linda Tulisso)**

We are gathered together this morning, in loving presence, to honor and celebrate the life and work of our departed friend and spiritual colleague, Rosemary Macdonald. Although we are here to release her, we will always embrace her in our hearts as we remember and cherish her blessed role and hard-earned contributions.

Rosemary was an integral part of the foundation of our precious School. For almost 34 years she served us all by serving the Teacher, the School and herself first. For many of us men number four, Rosemary was our first role model. She was very fond of Peter Ouspensky. I quote a passage from the Fourth Way that embodies the practical quality of her work ethic:

*Let me repeat what I said earlier: you have received these ideas and came here because certain people have worked before you and have put their energy and time into it. Now you must learn to share the responsibility. You cannot continue getting the ideas without sharing the responsibility; this is quite natural. So, if not to-day, then to-morrow one must 'do.' Do what? One must understand what to demand from oneself. We study school methods, and this is the only way to study them.*

May Rosemary's passing help to remind us of what is truly important in our own lives. Let us use these moments to consider our own mortality and to strengthen our understanding that death is a movement forward. Let us stand for a moment of silent presence.

### **Music: Marieke Furnee, Violin, Alexandra Kachugina, Cello**

Bach: Goldberg Variations, Aria and First Variation

### **Eulogy: Nicholas Spaulding**

Whether you are listening to these words today, here at Apollo, or, maybe reading them now in some other time or place, it is hoped that they serve truly, and express our deep affection for Rosemary. Though her task is now complete, may our appreciation for her continue and deepen over time, as did our friendship.

Shakespeare's Sonnet XXX was a favorite of Rosemary's and it is easy to imagine that over the past 300 years many eulogies have ended with its recitation. Today I would like to begin with it with just the first three and the last two lines. From Sonnet XXX:

*When to the sessions of sweet silent thought, ...*

*I summon up remembrance of things past, I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought, ...*

*...but if the while I think on thee, dear friend, all losses are restored, and sorrows end.*

Rosemary Macdonald was, in all probability, the most important woman in my life. Her intelligence, dedication and sense of humor were remarkable. And also there was her understanding and valuation for attention to details.

On the evening of September 22, 1978, a concert was first held in this room, the first in a series of over

130 such concerts to be held each year. The international standing of the visiting artists, the musical scope of the program, and Rosemary's direction made this room one of the most prominent classical concert-halls in the nation. Her rapport with the many artists and our own education as an attentive audience created a legacy cherished by those artists and ourselves to this day. In 1993, already 11 years ago, our annual Music Festival was dedicated to Rosemary's efforts in those early years.

Thursday a note sent from Asaf contained this recollection by Robert: "I can still see Rosemary and myself first entering the property in 1971, then, opening a savings account in order to purchase it." Also included in Asaf's message was this quotation from Lewis Carroll:

*With youth, good health, and sufficient money, it seems quite possible for a man to lead, for some years together, a life of mixed gaiety ... with the exception of one solemn fact, with which we are liable to be confronted at any moment ... the necessity of attending to a message, which may come before he has finished reading this page. "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." The ever-present sense of this grim possibility has been in all ages, a nightmare that men have striven to shake off.*

Lewis Carroll then records in a footnote that as he wrote those words, a knock at his door came with a letter announcing the death of a dear friend. Rosemary, however, was well prepared, and at peace with her play, and as you may know, asked that any financial remembrances be made to the Lewis Carroll School or the Apollo Performing Arts.

And in relation to the building of a community, Rosemary, along with many of us here, built [what we call in these days] the infrastructure of Apollo: the Court of the Caravans, the Prytaneion, and Apollo d'Oro. Still, in our hearts, we know these are only the externals, and that Rosemary was in fact a builder of the emotional infrastructure of the Fellowship itself. Robert has often said, *Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, and Horn - we owe so much to them*. And I ask, is it possible to say that the transition from Horn to Burton to us has been as difficult as it has been miraculous? Rosemary was there. And she was there at your side during the intervals. Her mental and emotional focus was most helpful when at times things seemed to be very dark. Somehow, she was able to help with the acceptance of friction and then later offer guidance through the digestion of the experience as well. Rosemary, helping men become men, and women become women.

Finally then, as her own external sphere of activity was reduced overtime, degree by degree, she was accepting, and accommodated herself to suit the circumstances. I was thinking, on a literary note, that Oscar Wilde could have learned a thing or two from Rosemary; she changed her wallpaper, and more than once!

And some of our best breakfasts together were simply a few biscuits from a can cooked in her small toaster oven. Tuesday at a dinner with friends, I served our huge, wonderful 183 Founders Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, and when I asked for some thoughts on Rosemary, Joseph Bruno paused, then said *Wasn't Rosemary 83?* We raised our glasses in honor of one of the Founders.

So, over the next few weeks, we will take time with each other and share our personal moments of memory about Rosemary. Gwendolyn was with her often during her last days and hours. Robert was able to visit her bedside before leaving to teach in Europe. Robert later arranged for Rosemary's favorite Schubert, *The Trout Quintet*, to be performed live for her in her living room last Saturday. And, as it happened, just after the music ended, she drew her last breath from this life.

From Robert: *At this point in the history of our school, something very sacred is occurring.* Thank you Robert. Thank you Rosemary. And thank you, her many friends.

**Music: Elizabeth Kent, Vocal, Veronique Englebert, Piano**  
Schubert: Moonlit Night [Mondnacht]

**Reading: Agnes Kuchuk**

*William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice*  
The quality of mercy is not strain'd  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;  
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself,  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice.

**Minister's Conclusion:**

In Psalm 90 it is written:

*We spend our years as a tale that is told.  
The days of our years are threescore years and ten;  
and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years,  
yet is their strength labor and sorrow;*

*for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.  
So teach us to number our days,  
That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*

Although Rosemary is no longer with us on Earth, she had successfully sown her wisdom into our hearts and minds, where it continues to grow into the fabric of being. May Rosemary's rich life inspire us as we each use the time we have left to seek that vital yet elusive thread of self-remembering that connects us, moment to moment, to the immortal Gods.