

Speech from Danny Lordan on the occasion of the 25th anniversary

Twinning between Waldaschaff and Clonakilty

Mr Bürgermeister, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen; I am so happy and so thankful to the Freundeskreis Clonakilty to allow me the opportunity to address you on this great day. I cannot believe that we celebrate the 25th anniversary of our official twinning of our two towns. We all look so much younger, slimmer and fitter than we were back then on the 2nd of July 1989.

To say that the twinning between Waldaschaff and Clonakilty is a good twinning is a big understatement. To say it is a fantastic twinning is getting nearer to the truth. To say it is the best twinning ever is just absolutely correct. It is true indeed that we do not have many exchanges in business or commerce. Most twinings between big cities thrive on this level of connection. I would say however we have the very best twinning in the World because of the bond of friendship and love that exists and continues to grow between our two peoples. There is something really special about this place called Waldaschaff and these wonderful people here that are hard to explain. You feel it in your heart; you feel it in your bones. It does not live on logic but purely on emotions, feelings and love. These in my mind are qualities that are unconquerable.

I came here first in 1985 with Saint Patrick's Brass Band from Clonakilty. I had won the trip in a lottery. I never won much in my life but winning that prize was better than winning any Lotto. We had a wonderful time here over Easter 1985. I fell in love with Waldaschaff; I fell in love with Germany; its people and its values. I can tell you that on my way home to Clonakilty I was in tears.

Then after a few short years we started to discuss a twinning between our two towns. Then I came more often to Waldaschaff. It was a great honour for me to have been involved in the twinning process. I will never forget the wonderful times we had here, the beautiful places we visited and the new friends we made. We also had a lot of fun; there are many, many stories, fantastic stories that we must write down so that they can be passed on to the next generations and never lost.

There are of course many friends that were here with us 25 years ago who have gone to their eternal reward. I know they will never be forgotten between us for they were great individuals and I hope and pray that they all lay safely in the arms of Jesus.

There are so many people here that I would love to thank and acknowledge for their great contributions to our friendship and twinning; where can I possibly begin. I hope you will agree with me, least we are here for the entire evening that I acknowledge only those who worked so hard at the beginning to promote our great friendship and twinning.

I would especially like to mention first and foremost Walter Schmittner. Without Walters knowledge of Ireland and especially of all the pubs in Cork there would have never been a connection between Waldaschaff and Clonakilty. Then of course there is the former Burgermeister Peter Winter with his short, wonderful, poetic and inspiring speeches; Then we have in no particular order Father Manfred Hock, Margit Hornung, Peter und Maria Heller, Ralph u Barbara Hundertmark, Christian Kunkel, Klara Pfaff, Walter Schmittner, Otto und Lore Steigerwald, Helena Zentgraf, Bernhard Zwiesler, Josef und Maria Zwiesler. There are also of course all the host families that welcomed us into their homes; their lives and with whom so many people have bonded and made lasting wonderful friendships.

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What can we say is the result of our 25years of twinning? I know from history that the Normans invaded Ireland in 1169. Then just 100 years later those Normans had become as history states “more Irish than the Irish themselves” I feel that after 25 years the people of Waldaschaff have become more Irish than the Irish themselves. I hope we have not destroyed the German ethics of time and punctuality but I sometimes do wonder?

For example I know of at least one Waldaschaffer that was more Irish than the Irish themselves, many years before the Twinning was founded. I think he went very early on to Ireland, so that he could be baptized there and really truly feel at home.

I know our friendship will continue to blossom and grow in the years ahead. I put it to the young people of Waldaschaff and lay a challenge before them to look to the pioneers in their community who back in 1982 headed off to Clonakilty in a VW minibus. They were Bernhard Zwiesler, Christian Kunkel and Manfred Hock and all only 20 years old; now that took some courage and foresight. Let us never loose sight of our great friendship and love for one another and let us rededicate ourselves today to our great twinning and to the new generation coming up.

Finally I would like to encourage more clubs, groups and especially young people to take up the mantle of their elders and to carry on with this great friendship that their parents have started for them. There are great opportunities for clubs like the; Flower Club; Historical Society; Walking Groups; Singing Clubs; Garden Clubs; Photo Club; Artists Groups; Fire Brigades and many, many more to come, share and experience other cultures.

The twinning offers a most wonderful opportunity to travel, to get to know other people, other customs, other ways of life and to build up fantastic and lifelong friendships. Twinning is the Gateway to peace in our time.

“Of all the things I have accomplished in my life so far and of all the things I have yet to accomplish; getting to know Waldaschaff and the German people has been the greatest accomplishment of all”