**Symbols of Fr. John’s life and person**

I invite:

1. Shane to bring up his phone and his good pen: You all know what that means – he was a man of communication, also a very modern man who kept up with the news, a man who used that pen to write cards and letters to so many people and who used the phone also to keep contact with people and to keep up with hurling results and other pieces of news.

2. Gavin to bring up a sliotar (the ball used in hurling). Fr. John was a proud Borrosoleigh man and a proud Tipperary man, but he also had a lovely generosity. He didn’t want Tipperary to dominate for years and years, he’d like other people to be able to share in the joy of winning the All-Ireland. I know that this might be kind of heretical to some ears here, but it was something of Fr. John’s lovely generosity of spirit.

3. Michael, his brother, is going to bring up a pack of cards. John loved Kenny Rogers’ song, The Gambler: “You gotta know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em, know when to walk away… ”. Somebody who is a good card player has to have a good memory – John had a prodigious memory. You have to be able to be a risk-taker – John wasn’t simply a safe pair of hands – he was that – but he also took risks, took a punt on life, took a punt on people. He also played cards sometimes too.

4. Ross is going to bring up Fr. John’s rosary beads. He had a great love for Mary - the Rosary was one of the fundamental prayers that he prayed every day, and for so many of us he prayed using the Rosary beads.

5. Evan is going to bring up a lovely icon which was gifted to Fr. John by an Irish woman named Renee Kluger to whom Fr. John used to bring Holy Communion in Rome and with whom he became great friends. It was originally given given by Pope John Paul II to Renee Kluger’s husband Jerzy, a Jewish man who was best friends with Karol Woytyla from childhood – Renee gave it to Fr. John before she died, and Fr. John in turn gave it to our good friend Fr. Eamonn who is here with us before leaving Rome last November.

6. Sinead is going to bring up one of Fr. John’s passports. He loved travel. It wasn’t always for pleasure. He travelled far and wide as a Pallottine, as Provincial, before being Provincial, the time the Provincial Council went on tour instead of having a Provincial Assembly. But he also loved travelling for pleasure.

There’s so much more that could symbolise Fr. John, but these are just a few simple but profound that capture something of the person that Fr. John was in this world and also continues to be.