



Eulogy for Eddie Diprose

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By

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I was Eddie's Godfather and was present at his christening right here in this very church.

I never got to know him very well - we always lived in different cities.

My biggest impression of Eddie I gained through what was said at his funeral in Sydney last week.

Particularly by his Mother, Jenny. Eddie was king of the kids. A great kid - A great mate. Everybody's white haired boy - literally.

I think Eddie still was a boy and that he faced the threshold of manhood - the Age of Reason. This is not something that happens when you are 18 or 21 but when something changes inside your head, inside your soul and you take on full responsibility for yourself.

A boy gets a parking ticket and shoves in the glove box and forgets about it.

Eddie had \$800 worth of unpaid parking tickets and a letter from the Licensing Branch or DMR or whatever - telling him that his driver's license had been revoked forever.

Because he worked as a removalist he assumed he had lost his job as well.

At the funeral his boss told me that it was not the case and that he could have got him a provisional license.

"If only he had talked to me."

I must have heard that said a dozen times; "If only he had talked to me."

Loss of his license was the proximate cause of Eddie's death but I believe there are other less immediate causes.

Somehow I think we all failed him.

Deaths such as Eddie's are not uncommon amongst young men. I feel that as a community we have failed all of those young men who take their own lives in this way.

We no longer have any rite of passage into manhood - no key to the door. We seem to have lost the knack of helping young men like Eddie cross that threshold.

In contemporary Australia the Real Estate industry looks like a conspiracy of the old against the young. Few young men (and women) of Eddie's age can realistically aspire to owning their own home as my generation could.

At our schools and universities it is fashionable to teach them that there is no justice in law, no beauty in art and no truth in science.

We tell them that the planet has no future, that our generation has wrecked it by its conspicuous consumption.

By implication, we are telling them that they too have no future.

We teach them, subtly, that there is no hope.

It's all baloney of course. It's a gigantic arrogance. *Après mois le deluge.*

A more objective view might see us as living in a golden age, at least here in
Australia and in a material sense.

We need to teach our young people that the planet does indeed have a future
and so does this country and so do they.

We need to teach them that there is such a thing as Justice.

There is such a thing as Beauty.

There is such a thing as Truth.

And that they need to go on inventing and recreating these things afresh for
themselves in each generation. That despite the anger and the pain and the
misery from time to time, that life is a great gift - the greatest gift of all and not
to be squandered because of a glove-box full of parking tickets.