

A loving couple, both parishioners at St Nicholas Parish Church, Belfast, who died within a few weeks of each other, were likened to Saul and Jonathan in a heartwarming tribute.

Speaking of the late Billy and Vera Walker, the Ven Clayton Stevenson said: "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided". (2 Samuel 1: 23).

Billy died on on January 21 this year at the age of 71, and Vera died just 15 days later on February 5, aged 69. Both had been diagnosed with brain cancer, Billy in October last year and Vera last December.



In his tribute Archdeacon Clayton said Billy and Vera were a lovely couple. They married in St Nicholas Church in 1962 and lived in Dunmurry and then Lambeg.

They joined Derryvolgie Parish where Vera was the Superintendent of the Junior Sunday School for 17 years. Billy was organist of St Nicholas from 1975 - 1989 and afterwards joined Derryvolgie and became Churchwarden, Parochial Nominator, Secretary of the Select Vestry and Deputy Organist. He was also a valued member of the Executive Committee of the Trinity Housing Association which provides suitable housing for retired and handicapped people.

"Not only was he a very good organist, he was also a very fine churchman. He loved the Anglican form of worship and we as a congregation had music and praise of the highest quality," said Archdeacon Clayton.

"We thank God for Billy and Vera and we offer our love and affection, thought and prayer to Karen and Ross: David, Jill, Iona and Dillon: Alison, Andy, Holly, Megan and Ethan: also Margaret and Tom, Vera's sister and brother.

"We thank God upon every remembrance of Billy and Vera and we pray that they may rest in peace and rise in glory.

The couple's daughter Karen McIvor said the loss of their parents had been hard for the family. "However, we take comfort in the fact that neither would have lived well without the other, they were very much a couple devoted to

each other since they met in their early teens. we do feel that there was a mercy for each of them in the time passing.”