

Polly Lauer Funeral Homily – Oct 14, 2017

Surviving Family Members: Brother, Ron Voss; Children, Susan & Jack Silverio, Dan & Carol Lauer, Kathy Lauer, Michael & Kim Lauer; Daughter-in-law, Elva Lena Blatt, Grandchildren, Kevin Lauer, Timothy Lauer, Meagan Lauer, Benjamin Lauer, Andrew Lauer; Great Grandchildren, Johnathon, Jude and Griffin Lauer.

Beyond the temporary physical person on the outside, there is a spiritual and eternal person on the inside. The flesh dies and is buried, but the spirit lives forever with God. When someone we love passes on, there is naturally an element of sorrow. When you've been around someone for many years, or for however long you've been alive, that person can become an important part of your life, and you miss them when they're gone.

Let not your hearts be troubled...is the message today - to the family members and friends, members the QAC family - to all who mourn the death of our dear sister, Polly. Let not your hearts be troubled.

To be sure, this would just be an empty platitude if it were not backed up with some reality, some substance, behind it. But that's the point. There is reality, there is substance, behind these words, because these are the words of Jesus, directed first to his disciples, and now directed to us: "Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled."

And these are important, real, substantive words for us to know and believe, because the reality of death is all around us, and to have someone near and dear to us die, like Polly, that brings death all too close to home.

That's how it is with death. The conditions are present--the conditions are right--all around us, all the time, for death to occur to any one of us, at any time. A literal hurricane or a tornado could come through in the night and flatten our houses. Or it might come as a gentle rain. And the youngest and healthiest among us cannot escape the touch of these weather phenomena – no matter what shape they may take.

And here we are at a funeral mourning the loss of a loved one, someone we know and love. The tornado watch has just been upgraded to a warning. The alert has been sounded. The siren is going off. This is the time to take cover, to take shelter.

And that is what this service is all about this morning. It's telling us all where to find cover, where to find that shelter, in the storms or he rains, and that is, in Jesus. He is the cover for all our transgressions...our shelter in the midst of the storm. In him we are safe, even in the face of the fierce winds of death that would sweep us all away.

Jesus tells us, "Let not your hearts be troubled." ..." there is a peace I am giving you." A place and a peace to untrouble our fearful hearts. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

God sent his own Son into the world, to be our substitute and our covering and our shelter. There is no other way to safety.

This is the peace that will sustain us when our hearts are troubled. This is the peace that will support us when our hearts are fearful, the peace that will surround us when our hearts are lonely, the peace that no one can take from us, even as we pass through the valley of the shadow of death.

I'm sure these words of Jesus were very near and dear to Polly...words of promise, of hope, of salvation. Words of a place and a peace from Jesus, to untrouble our fearful hearts.

And to you the family, I know how much you loved Polly. And I know that you would have taken her place at any time during any of her illness. But wasn't in God's plans for right now. Polly lived a full and meaningful life bringing joy to her family. So instead of allowing you to take her place, God offers Polly and you a total peace that surpasses all understanding.

When I stand here at any funeral, I sometimes think about the life the person has lived - that dash between the birth date and date of death. I think about all they have seen, all they have experienced. And I think about this story I read on line by Jerry Gosper, a Baptist preacher:

Grandma, some 90+ years, sat feebly on the patio bench. She didn't move, just sat with her head down staring at her hands. When I sat down beside her she didn't acknowledge my presence and the longer I sat I wondered if she was OK.

Finally, not really wanting to disturb her but wanting to check on her at the same time, I asked her if she was OK. She raised her head and looked at me and smiled. 'Yes, I'm fine, thank you for asking,' she said. 'I didn't mean to disturb you, grandma, but you were just sitting here staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure you were Ok.'

She asked, 'Have you ever looked at your hands, I mean really looked at your hands?'

I slowly opened my hands and stared down at them. I turned them over, palms up and then palms down. No, I guess I had never really looked at my hands as I tried to figure out the point she was making. Grandma smiled and related this story:

"Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years. These hands, though wrinkled shriveled and weak, have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life.

They braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor. They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child, my mother taught me to fold them in prayer. They tied my shoes and pulled on my boots. They held my husband and wiped my tears when he went off to war.

They have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son. Decorated with my wedding band they showed the world that I was married and loved someone special.

They wrote my letters to him and trembled and shook when I buried my parents and spouse. They have held my children and grandchildren, consoled neighbors, and shook in fists of anger when I didn't understand.

They have covered my face, combed my hair, and washed and cleansed the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw. And to this day when not much of anything else of me works really well these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer.

These hands are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of life. But more importantly, it will be these hands that Jesus will reach out and take when he leads me home. And with my hands He will lift me to His side and there I will use these hands to touch the face of God." (PAUSE)

An earthly light has gone out, but where Polly is, no earthly light is needed. The glory of God, shining brighter than the sun, is her radiance, and her face is now glistening in that light!

Polly was a child of God and she has now gone back to God. We all loved her, and today we should not be crying, but be singing. Polly is in God's hands as she has been for most all of her life. The only difference is that now she sees Jesus face to face.

So we come to the end of a journey; it is a good day. An earthly journey has ended and a heavenly residence has been established. Polly has touched the face of God!

Deacon Greg Cecere
October 14, 2017

(excerpts from redeemerpotosi.com | June 1, 2013 | The Rev. Charles Henrickson)