

Don Bennett's Funeral October 31, 2009

1st Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

*There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build.
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.
A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.
A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak.
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

What advantage has the worker from his toil?

*I have considered the task which God has appointed for men to be busied about.
He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts,
without men's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.*

2nd Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.

Gospel: John 14:1-6

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where (I) am going you know the way." Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth ⁵ and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

We are all in shock with Don's passing. And we all know, that none are as shocked as much as you Kathy, and you Michele, Lisa, Stephanie and Tim. Even Pepper misses him. It seems so real one minute and so unreal the next. It was all so sudden and surprising that the sadness has just grabbed us.

But we are called to console each other as the second reading said...to remind each other that we are not here grieving without hope. God loves us so much that Jesus promised that we will always be with the Him. And, in the Gospel Jesus said, "...where I am you also may be." But how do we know that this is true and not just some words to make us feel better? How can we be truly consoled and confident that that Don is with Jesus?

I think the evidence is in what has been going on the last few days. Family and friends have gathered from far and wide. To hug and cry together, yes, but more importantly to share our love for Don, and for you Kathy and your whole family. We have come to celebrate life with you, eternal life and not eternal death. We are blessed with the love of God and we do everything possible to share it. We aren't just talking, we are doing it. I ask you, who other than this band of Southside Irish Catholics could do it any better?

I have heard many stories over the last 3 days, all of them very joyous memories. Compiling the picture boards on Thursday was a continuous string of "I remember when this..." comments. The stack of Don's handmade birthday cards crafted by the kids told of the years and years of loving celebrations. His brother Joe said he doesn't recall ever arguing with Don or seeing him angry, on the other hand, MaryKay would only say, "well you know how brothers are!" Grandma Rock said she never had a harsh word with Don...but, Gerry, I have to tell you that I warned Don years ago not to get you ticked off....and no, I won't remind you what I did.

Patty Roe shared about the years that her Ken and Don would play chess, darts, Pong, cards, or some other competitive game late into the night, especially in the garage...sometimes until dawn....I finally got the story on why they called each other "Pup," but I am sworn to secrecy.

We now realize how much these last few months had been a blessing for Don as he came out of the fog of depression. Many people spoke of the weeks around Stephanie's wedding saying Don was making progress...getting back to his old self of being funny and helpful....We all saw how proud he was walking Stephanie down the aisle on her wedding day...it was amazing to see the transformation.

We can be confident that Don is with Jesus. And we can smile that Don, right now, is with his buddies Pup and Robby, with Grandpa Rock and his dad talking baseball, ready for another game of the World Series.

We love you Don, rest in peace.