

If Death Ends All

(All Saints)

Text: Isaiah 25:6-9
Revelation 21:1-6 (Series B. All Saints) Ps. 24
John 11:32-44

He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared." Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!"

Let us pray:

If we could see, only for a moment, just how glorious homecoming was, no one here would call them back to the limits. This worship service is dedicated to three special people that were once members of St. Columba. Mary Foster, Wess Bourgaize, Gorge Philips and Ruth Wileman.

Even though *Mary Foster, Wess Bourgaize, Gorge Philips, and Ruth Wileman* will be missed, there is something very appropriate about their departure, even as the author of Ecclesiastes indicated, "There is a time to be born, and a time to die (see Ecclesiastes 3:2).

It is appropriate because...

...they had lived out a full, complete, life.

... they had accepted and known the love of God.

... their house was in order

... they were ready to go home to their heavenly abode.

... they were Christians and loved God

Years ago, a film was produced about missionary work in Angola entitled, *I'll Sing, Not Cry*. It was based on the book, *African Manhunt*, by Monroe Scott, which narrated Christ's victories in the lives of Africans.

There was the story of Pastor Ngango, whose beloved wife had dies. Great numbers came to the funeral, and they wailed in the customary pagan chaunt of despair, until Pastor Ngango stood up by the casket and said, "*Stop all this yelling and howling.*"

The mourners stood in shocked silence. *“This woman was a child of God. She has gone to her Father. I loved her, but today we are not crying, we are singing.”* With that he started to sing, *“Praise God,”* and the Christians joined him. It was not a song of despair or fear or sadness. It was a praise to God, a song of Christ’s victory, a hymn of confidence. Across the centuries comes the theme *“I’ll sing, not cry.”*

Our very life, is a life of constant change or different stages, and these can never be recaptured or relived. This may be the day you completed your schooling. On the one hand, you rejoiced that school was over for you, but on the other, it marked the end of a part of your life that will never be repeated. Let me share with you a thought from Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, she wrote: (I love this quotation because it is so African)

“Dying is something that we human beings do continuously, not just at the end of our physical lives on this earth. The stages of dying - apply to any significant change in a person’s life, and change is a regular occurrence in human existence. If you can face and understand your ultimate death, perhaps you can learn to face and deal productively with each change that presents itself in your life. And through a life time of such commitment, you can face your final end with peace and joy, knowing that you have lived your life well.”

Even though this service of remembrance is dedicated to four individuals and due to time restraint, I would share few thoughts on *Weston Bourgaize* passionately know as Wess. Wess was one of St. Columba members who joined St. Ansgar when their parish closed down few years ago.

Wess was the nicest man you could ever meet. Kind, generous, hand working and faithful in very task that was assigned to him. These stained - glass windows you see behind me, Wess was part of the crew that removed and transported and installed them faithfully.

His daily routine, he would come in after taken care of his ailing wife Betty in the morning, most of the time he would drive by Tim Horton pick up coffee, tea and some donuts for us, at noon he will go home and nurse his wife Betty, and return to finish the day with us. The only time he missed work was when he took his to see the doctor.

He was on Church board as a Trustee, usher etc. Wess wasn't a person who just came to Church and had his hands in his pocket, he was involved in the life of congregation.... Thus.. how do say goodbye to such a friend? *I Guess Its, Not What You Take, When You Leave This World Behind You. It's What You Leave Behind You When You Go*"

Today the Bible readings remind us that the Christian faith offers something that is unique and special - **hope**. In fact, no-one can give a person hope like faith in Jesus does. *(I have One Hope: that is Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins).*

Friends in Christ life is not all about us we have a proverb in our African language that says "*Umatu Ngumutu Ugabantu*" literally it means ... "*A person is a person because of another person.*" In reality life is about others.... living for the sake of others.

This is how I personally see my journey in life. My dear friends.... it doesn't cost to be nice to people, and it is important to value people. Your birth came through others, your name was given by others. You were educated by others and you earn your income through others. When you go to the hospital, you are cared for by others.

We don't go around demanding respect.....People give you respect. Your first bath was done by others and you last bath will be done by others..... If you ever end up in a senior residence you will be care for by others. So why all this fuss !!! Why do we humans behave as if we can control the entire world?

On your final journey *Others* will carry you to the grave side for burial. Everything that you and I have ever owned in this life will be received and enjoyed by others who did not even work for it. So, everything is about Others. "*A person is a person because of another person.*"

“What Gain, then, is it for a Man or woman to win the whole world and Ruin his / her Life?” If I have all the eloquence of people or of angels, but speak without Love, I am simply a making loud noise...without love I am nothing at all. It is Not What You Take, When You Leave This World Behind You. It’s What You Leave Behind You When You Go”

“Now God's home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain.

This gives **hope** in the face of the worst tragedies that fill our lives, including our own death. They knew where he was going, I believe. When *Mary Foster, Wess Bourgaize, Gorge Philips and Ruth Wileman* were baptized the seed of Hope was planted in them by God through rite of Baptism, though they had their ups and downs, their faith in God never wavered until their passing.

Today, *Mary Foster, Wess Bourgaize, Gorge Philips and Ruth Wileman* their journey on earth is ended, and as they enter the realm of the eternal and behold the Lamb of God who took away their sins. I thank their families and friends who stood with them as they tried to navigate their way through life.

*Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heaven and home,
When Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is He:
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
I sing because I’m happy, I sing because I’m free,
For His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.*

To me, the hope that we will spend eternity with our God is a real hope. No more pain! No more death! No more disease! No more sorrow! That is Heaven. Heaven is not only the absence of certain things, but also the positive presence of others.

It is the place of 'no more night' but the eternal brightness of the radiant glory of our God. It is a place that is filled with magnificent praise and worship to our great God. Just as faith and love are experiences, so is hope. It is this content of hope that fills the waning days of life.

We have gathered here this morning to say our *goodbye, farewell, au revoir*, to these saints of God co-workers in God's kingdom. It is my aspiration that we leave this house of worship, with a renewed *hope* of our *faith* and commitment to God.

They have left us with the *Gift of Faith*....and devotion. Well, done *Mary Foster, Wess Bourgaize, and Ruth Wileman* you have earned your rest.

Today is All Saints Day; a time set-aside in the Church calendar to remember and honour our loved ones who have gone before us those who fought in wars or battles to secure our freedom. They have run the race relentlessly, finished the race, and kept the faith.

With faith in Christ we can be confident about our future. We may not know any of the details about our future. We don't know what life holds for us in the years ahead. Neither do we know what troubles and joys lie ahead.

The details of our future in this world are all uncertain and unknown, but there is one thing that we can be certain about and that is - we do have a Saviour who loves us and who holds our lives in his hands and deals with us lovingly and in the most caring way possible. And in this love we trust.

The home of God is among mortals...God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more; for the first things have passed away. [Revelation 21:3b-4]

Therein lies our hope. One Hope, Hope in Jesus Christ our Lord.

"I'll sing, not cry." **Amen.**

November 7, 2021

Let us pray: God of us all, Saints and Sinners together, set our hearts free from the prison of hate, the emptiness of self-importance, and the mindlessness of earthly privilege. May we each claim our divine endowment of hope, grace, and mercy as we strive to ascend the hill of the Lord and stand always in Your Holy Place. We ask through Jesus, our Redeemer Christ; in the Unity of the Holy Spirit; who together with You are One God above all, through all, and in all, for ever and ever. **Amen**

Prayer concerns: *Matilda Molyneaux-Piper, Shirley Walker, Hanne Bourgeoise, Ellen Eriksen, the dire situation in Afghanistan, Middle East & Covid -19 patients, essential and Frontline workers, Christian Aid Workers held as hostages in Haiti, Municipal elections, and Families of departed souls in recent weeks and months.*

Make melodies in your heart with these hymns:

- **For All the Saints # 422**
- **Abide with Me # 629**
- **Rock of All Ages # 623**
- **The King of Love My Shepherd Is # 502**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Bettina Bourgeois, & Teresa Husain

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY