

I've known Curtis and Betty since I was in the seminary, and I've been a priest over 35 years, so that gives you some idea of how long I've benefitted from their friendship. With all of you, I am sad to lose this man, but I am grateful to God for the inspiration he gave his family, his friends, this community and me. Curt took care of himself - he was conscious about diet and exercise. He also took care of his spiritual health, making personal prayer and participation at the mass cornerstones of his life. He was dedicated to scouting, proud of the tribe of Mic-O-Say, and reliable as a volunteer here at the church. Curt was definite about things and just indomitable when obstacles came into his path. When his family faced trials related to their health, or his neighborhood seemed threatened by crime, and especially when he faced the tragedy no parent wants to experience - the untimely death of his son - he was a resolute presence that made you feel you were going to get through the next crisis just fine. He himself had a series of health issues that would have taken down a lesser man, but he treated each one like a bruise. He had both knees replaced; he fell off a ladder, he struggled with rehab, but he had definite ideas about his medical care, and he took everything in stride. Through all of this he derived great sustenance from the loving support of his wife of 59 years, Betty.

Losing a guy like Curt brings unusual grief to a family and friends. He was the person who could help you through a time like this, and he is gone. Yet, in another way, he is still here. You cannot experience a man like Curt without having his memory live forever. The values he taught will remain very much a part of us who knew him.

The second reading we heard for this funeral mass is probably the shortest reading in the entire lectionary. It's only one verse long. But it's one of those lines of the bible that, after you've heard it, there's nothing else to say. John, the author of the Book of Revelation, reports an extended and extravagant vision throughout its 22 chapters. He sees heavenly beings adoring God, and he beholds merciless conflict. The book ends with a peaceful vision of God's reign. Some people think the Book of Revelation is a tale of doom, but it is full of hope. It tells the kind of story that resonates with the life Curt led: in spite of conflicts and obstacles, peace will reign. Chapter 14 is the source of the one verse we heard today. John hears a voice with a message that is so important, he is told to write it down. It's a message that makes you rethink what is important about life. Here it is: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Then John heard another voice, the voice of the Spirit, broaden the message: "Yes, let them find rest from their labors, for their works accompany them." Those who have labored hard for God, those who have taken the time to help their neighbor and to do it "in the Lord," after a lifetime of effort, they will find rest.

We therefore pray for the repose of someone's soul. They'll have rest in death if they spent life at work. We lift up to God the soul of our brother Curt. We are witnesses to the works of charity that meant so much to him, and we pray in confidence that God will be even more pleased with the man who gave us such pleasure. May God welcome Curt among the saints at rest.