

Joe Recob

Everyone around here is just stunned. We loved Joe because we knew he loved us and would never want to cause anyone grief or harm. It seems now that one way he tried to care for us was by keeping his troubles inside. He probably didn't want us to be burdened with all the things that were bothering him. Maybe Joe felt he was capable of doing harm to someone else, and he didn't want that. Maybe he was looking for a way to protect others. We just don't know.

We do know that Joe Recob was a man who enjoyed life and was devoted to his family. He was still in love with his wife of 43 years (Darlene, be assured of our prayers for you). He loved his grandkids who brought him to life. Joe served our country in the US Navy. He worked hard for AT&T and the Pioneer Store. People respected his mind and his skills, his heart and his faith. Some of you know that, when he was a kid, Joe thought about becoming a Catholic priest, so he attended St. John's High School Seminary here in Kansas City. That's where I first met him. Joe was a senior my freshman year. We were both musicians for the same masses at the same Catholic high school. We all have good memories of Joe, and these will last. Today, though, it's like we're in the dark, and we need someone to give us light.

Twice in John's gospel Jesus calls himself the light of the world. Once in chapter 8 and again in chapter 12. There, he explains why he came as the light of the world. He came so that we would not have to live in darkness. Sometimes we do. Sometimes we cannot feel the presence of God. From the cross, Jesus famously cried out, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" Even Jesus wondered where God was in that moment of darkness. It's not unusual to feel alone, like no one understands us, even though there are some who do. Often we don't realize how much other people really do care about what is going on inside us, so we keep quiet. It's not a good idea. When we are troubled, we should speak up; the people who love us want to know what's going on. Jesus Christ offers plenty of light. Sometimes he shines that light toward us through our neighbor. He places people on our path like beacons to guide our way. We owe it to the those who love us to let them know what we're thinking. We owe it to ourselves to trust them to give us the guidance we need.

Sometimes we stumble; we don't do what God commands. Jesus seemed to know that would happen too. He said, "if anyone hears my words and does not observe them, I do not condemn him, for I did not come to condemn the world but to save the world." We believe that God may still give us a chance to repent of our sins even after we die. But no one should take their own life. Our life belongs to God. It's on loan to us. We hand it back when he decides it's time. To do it any other way disrespects God's gift and creates unnecessary hardship for the very people we love.

All of you loved Joe, and all of you would have helped him if only you knew. But you didn't. It's not your fault. So now we are all doing what we can: We are passing Joe along from our hands into God's hands. We accompany him with our prayers. Let us remember the lessons of friendship Joe taught us, and in spite of our shock and loss, let us pray for flights of angels to take him to a place where he can finally put his troubles to rest.