

Sylvia Simone

We will all miss Sylvia, but John, we understand that no one will miss her more than you. Fifty-seven years of marriage is a testimonial to the love that the two of you held for each other. At one time or another all of us in this church have probably shaken our heads at the way the two of you communicated with each other. But somehow it worked. Somehow you each provided what the other needed. You understood each other, and far deeper than the words you said was the love that flowed between you. You knew each other a very long time, and you held yourselves together by the strongest of values: your faith in God, your love for the Church, your faithful friends, and your beautiful children.

Here at St. Anthony's, and earlier when it was Assumption Parish, Sylvia was a pillar of this community. She drew people together for socializing, fundraising, and education. She had a complete view of parish life. She did not simply become a volunteer. She was a leader. People looked up to her. They respected her. They followed her directions. They imitated her good heart. Even in recent years, when her physical abilities diminished, Sylvia never backed away from her association with this parish, this building, and its people. She came to mass as often as she could. She received communion even more frequently at home. She stayed connected with her friends. She shared her views. And she kept us all strong in our commitments by her example.

Sylvia knew how strong a human body and mind can be. She also learned how mortal we are. So did St. Paul. Paul was a vigorous apostle who traveled far and wide amid great personal difficulties. He gained strength from the gospel and gave his full effort to evangelization, but he was beaten, persecuted, stoned, shipwrecked, and imprisoned. He learned the hard way how weak the human body can be. You can hear it in the words he wrote to the Corinthians: "For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility. That which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?'" In spite of his trials and inabilities, St. Paul stared down death with confidence unmatched. He feared not the loss of his abilities because he knew that had met its match. Jesus Christ is the conqueror, the victor over death.

Jesus told his disciples at the Last Supper, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places." He was going to prepare a place to take them with him. Then he said, "Where I am going you know the way. ...I am the way," he said. "And the truth and the life." Thomas should have known that, of course, spending all that time with Jesus. We should know it too - principally because we spend time with Christ, but also because we spent time with Sylvia. She knew Jesus Christ; she believed Jesus Christ. She taught Jesus Christ.

The words we use to communicate with one another are unique unto ourselves, and so is the Word made flesh that God spoke to us. If we listen for that word, we will come to know its way. Christ is our way. Christ is our truth. And even when we die, Christ is our life.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2017