

Robin Walsh

When I was in grade school, every day that I walked out the front door of the Turner house I faced the front door of the Walsh house. Woodland Avenue divided two zip codes, but it unified families and neighbors. The Walshes and the Turners became fast friends, red-headed kids in each household, members of the same church. The Turners did not like it when the Walshes moved to St. Louis. We had to learn about separation from friends at an early age.

The Walshes eventually came back, and Robin settled into school at Hogan High and Avila College, where some of my siblings attended. She was ever lively and active. After graduating she held managerial positions at Professional Medical Insurance and at the Design Group. She married the love of her life, another Walsh, Edmund, in a ceremony right here at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, where she became, as one of her teachers put it, “Walsh squared.” Robin and Ed poured their love into their only son Joshua, but they had to learn about separation again in the most painful way. In the past year both Robin and Ed lost their fathers, and Christie lost her godfather, so the Walshes are no strangers to grief and loss. But they have been surrounded by loving family, faithful friends, and a resilient faith that has guided them through the most difficult days of life, and given them an enviable interior joy. Robin was a planner and an organizer who never met a spreadsheet she didn’t like. Yet she encountered a life of unplanned events. These never got the best of her. She schooled herself in a love for order, and she found it where other people would fail. She accepted her final illness with grace, grateful for the blessings that poured every day from heaven above.

The discernment of blessing in the midst of suffering has sustained human beings from the dawn of time. The Book of Wisdom states it eloquently: “The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace.” In the New Testament, St. Paul reassures us, “If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.” The tragedies that flowed through Robin’s life never overwhelmed her. She died to herself again and again, but lived all that life could offer. “Come to me,” Jesus says, “all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you... and you will find rest for yourselves.” Robin gave testimony to that promise. She shouldered the yoke of a challenging life, but because her heart overflowed with love and faith, she maintained an inner spirit of rest.

If robins are a sign of spring, then we should take note of the signs that surround us this week. We all at times feel under the yoke of our labors, afflicted with separations we never wanted to have. But signs of life abound, signs that this Robin surely wanted us to see. It’s as though she has crossed Woodland Avenue again, into another zip code, to enter a different house that now she will call home. We gather in thanks today for the life that Robin lived and the inspiration she gave. We pray that Christ will welcome her home to a place that knows no pain or separation - only unity, order and rest.

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