

## James Sires

**Jim Sires spent 23 years in the military, specializing in planning and logistics, and developing curriculum for the army university. Throughout his life he focused on matters that concerned him most: faith and family, country and education, as well as the needs of other people, not just those of his own. Jim lived what he taught. He planned his own life and stayed faithful to his beliefs. He accomplished a great deal - not just in terms of tasks done, but also in terms of values sustained. In order to plan well, you have to follow your priorities. Then you give meaning to every minute you have.**

**God is the ultimate planner. Each year Christmas shows how from the creation of humanity, God desired to share paradise with us, and from our first fall from grace, God promised a Savior. We celebrate the birth of Christ not just for its historical significance, but for its future promise. God executed this plan successfully, though not without difficulty. St. Paul writes, "God did not spare his own son but handed him over for us all, will he not also give us everything else along with him?" Nothing will separate us from the love of God: anguish, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and the sword - none of it can keep us from the love that God has already poured out upon us.**

**At the crucifixion, when God's Son was handed over for us all, Jesus left an enduring image of his love in the tender exchange he made between his mother and his beloved disciple. Even on the cross, even while dying, he took care of them both, entrusting them to each other to help them live out their days in peace. Jesus stayed focused on his values all the way to the end. This is one reason he inspires us who struggle with sin and death to serve him.**

**Many people who devote their lives to military service in our country maintain a strong faith in God, so it is not surprising to find that the bible at times turns its attention to military conflict. The Book of Daniel envisions "a time unsurpassed in distress" yet protected by Michael, the guardian of God's people. At the time of death, the Book of Daniel says, "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; Some shall live forever.... The wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, And those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever."**

**That's our prayer for Jim today. That is our trust in God's promise. We pray that God will number Jim among those who lead the many to justice, so that he will shine like the stars forever within us and in the hearts of those who became wiser because of him. After all, Jim was a man who learned that the Lord was his shepherd, not just to provide for his own solace, but so that he could be a good shepherd for others: a man who remained faithful to his career and his family so that he could make the world a better place, a man who would rather we not talk about him - even at his funeral - but about more important concerns.**

**Nonetheless, we owe our values, education and faith to people like Jim, and we gather in hope that God will reward him by letting him awake from the dust of the earth into the stars of heaven, where nothing separates him from the love of Christ. As we follow Christ, may we overcome every difficulty to achieve the purpose of our lives and live out our days in peace.**

Monday, January 14, 2019