

Colby must have had a very active interior life. He must have thought a lot of things that many people who knew him very well never knew. He wore his emotions on his sleeve. You knew when he was angry and when he was in love, when he was depressed and when he was happy. But he kept a lot of the details inside. In high school he could pull grades up, but it was hard to do. After that he worked in departments like lawn care, photos, and cars, but he thought about becoming an actor or even a veterinarian. The Marine Corps put some structure onto his life and helped him feel safe. They helped him study. They taught him to be an expert marksman. He became a radio communicator and stayed in such good shape that he got the ironman award. The Marines had him help other people who were not doing so well, and Colby became an inspiration to many who admired his achievements. We thank God that Colby was able to develop himself personally and to help some other people as well.

Still, he had a lot going on inside, more than most people realized. He enjoyed being around people, and people enjoyed being around him. Sometimes it's hard for anyone to see that, and there's no more obvious example than Jesus hanging on the cross. In his Passion according to St. Mark, when Jesus got into trouble, his closest companions ran away. It wasn't that they didn't know he was in trouble or how to help. They knew, and they ran off scared. So here he is, friends gone, enemies have nailed him to a cross, and he called out to the one who was the closest. It's the most heart-wrenching prayer in the bible. "My God, my God," Jesus said, "why have you forsaken me?" Now, God did not forsake Jesus. There's no way that happened. We know that from the rest of Mark's gospel. As the young man told the women visiting the tomb, "[Jesus is not here;] he has been raised."

I am sure there were times when Colby felt forsaken. Well, he was wrong. He was never forsaken, still isn't. There was a cloud of love around him and above him, but he could not always feel it; he did not always know that it was there. He knew better. In fact he got tattooed with a verse from the New Testament. Philippians 4:13. We heard it in the first reading of this mass: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." It's a quote he probably knew he'd better remember. That quote is still true. God still strengthens him. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says we are stewards, not owners of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of. But, the catechism continues, we should not despair of the eternal salvation of people like Colby. God can provide opportunities for salvation in ways that we cannot imagine. "I can do all things in him who strengthens me."

Whoever you are, if you are feeling broken right now, you're in good company. Jesus felt the same way. But you are not forsaken. You will never be forsaken. There is love in this room. There is enough love here for everyone who is hurting. That is a lot of love, but it is a fraction of the love that God has for Colby. You may think the future will be more difficult than you can manage, but there's something you ought to know. You can find it in Philippians 4:13. You can do all things in the one who strengthens you, Jesus Christ.