

Elizabeth Boman

You all knew Elizabeth (or Joan) in other contexts than I did, but I'll tell you this: When I think of her, two things come to mind. She loved reading the bible, and she loved giving to others. If you're going to be remembered for two things in your life, it's hard to beat those.

One of my first conversations with her concerned her desire to visit a boy she was sponsoring in India. Then later she wanted to get active again as a reader of scripture at mass; she was good at it. Both these conversations opened a window into her soul. She was naturally a person who cared for those who had less, and her scripture readings sounded so comfortable that you knew she was at home listening to God and telling you what she heard.

Those qualities made her an ideal wife and mother and grandmother. She loved being married to Robert for 53 years and would remind you after he died that she was still married to him. She raised strong children and lavished her love on their kids. She just looked like someone God created in order to become a grandmother.

Elizabeth enjoyed watching a garden grow and selling people homes. Again, you can catch a glimpse into her soul. Her positive outlook on the world got stronger through the evidence of any garden: Things grow; things get more beautiful if you give them time. Her enjoyment of her own family made her want to share that experience with others. If she could help provide a home where other families could enjoy life, why not do it?

I think of that in this gospel passage from Saint John. Jesus is seated at table at the Last Supper with his disciples, and he offers a prayer to the Father for them. The disciples at times frustrated Jesus, but he enjoyed their company. At the end of his life, this is how he prayed about them: "Father, those whom you gave me are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me." It's easy to think of Jesus imagining Elizabeth in that prayer. She was a gift to him, and as she longed to provide a home for her husband, her children, her grandchildren, even her real estate clients, so Christ longed to prepare a home for her.

Saint Paul described discipleship in his Letter to the Romans. Once again, it's easy to think of Elizabeth as we hear these words: "No one lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." Paul speaks of someone who listened to the word of God and put it into practice, someone who cared for others, and who belonged to the Lord.

I can think of no better way to honor Elizabeth's memory than to recommit ourselves to the values she held so dear. Come to know the Lord through his word. Let the bible become the textbook of our lives. And let us share our resources with others, especially those who have less - whether materially or emotionally. If we have experienced happiness, let's help others find it as well. In that way we follow Elizabeth's footsteps, which themselves followed the footsteps of Christ.

Saturday, January 11, 2020