

I moved to Cameron just a few months after Frank died, but I told the 4 boys the other day that over the past 8 years I have come to know Pat and appreciate what a good person she was. At the same time, she lived a good long life. So I asked her sons, "Was there more about her that I should know?" They looked at each other, then back at me and said, "She never changed." It was like you could take any 8 years of her life, and you would know exactly the same person you were dealing with. They said she was very tolerant, and they admitted that with the 4 of them, she had to be. Pat was an ideal mother and homemaker. She worked for a while away from the house, but home was where she flourished. She was a very encouraging mother. She kept the house as neat as a pin. She never served a bad meal. She sewed, quilted, made things for her boys. She stood by her sons when they fell in love, and supported them through difficult days.

I will remember Pat especially for two things – her faith and her illness. Her faith was very strong; she came to church like clockwork and had good friends here who loved her and supported her. She didn't make a big deal out of her faith – it was just a peaceful part of who she was. She brought that same peacefulness to her illness. When I visited her last week, we all knew the end was near, but you wouldn't have known it talking to Pat. She was just herself. She took her illness as she took any other obstacle that life threw her way. It was just a part of life. You accept it and you move on another day.

Jesus felt the same way at the end of his life, according to John's gospel. During the week before he died, Jesus told his disciples about a grain of wheat – just a part of nature. It falls to the earth and dies, but then it produces much fruit. Jesus admitted, "I am troubled now, yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came." Instead, Jesus made a different prayer. He did not ask to be delivered from his death. He prayed that the Father's name would be glorified. You can only be that peaceful about dying if you have lived that way all your life, accepting the setbacks, appreciating the good days, and trusting that if God's will is done, all will be well.

After the resurrection, the apostles preached this good news, so that others could have the same reassurance that Jesus had given them. Peter explained the meaning of Jesus' life to Cornelius and his household; we hear him in today's first reading. Peter did it in just a few lines, but it was enough to tell the good news.

It doesn't take a lot of words to hand on your values from one generation to the next. It just takes a way of life, the right character, something consistent, something reliable, something that doesn't change with the wind, but remains constant no matter what comes along. As we remember Pat today, I know she would want us to remember the God who gave her life and directed her days. He is there, calling us, offering help, if we show the same faithfulness to him that he shows to us.