

Louie Giamalva

I met Louie Giamalva when I was pastor of St. Anthony's even before I came here to the cathedral. He was a fixture in Northeast Kansas City and a dedicated member of the Knights of Columbus. Louie appreciated all that the Knights stood for: service to others, spiritual development, and the bonding of faith-filled friends. He eventually moved into the Towers next door to us. Here at the cathedral he helped us as an usher and provided a model of devout prayer for anyone who saw him. You could tell he had to be suffering from various illnesses, and he seemed extremely weak. But he kept insisting he was fine, and his faith and his voice remained strong.

One sign of his faithfulness to Christ is the way that his brother Knights of Columbus remained faithful to him. Even in death, Louie has been surrounded by the care of those who admired his faith, his ability to withstand suffering and sorrow, and his determination to greet each day with genuine trust and hope.

His friends chose September 2nd to remember Louie because this is VJ day. On August 14, 1945, Japan announced its surrender, and the formal surrender took place on this day. Louie served in the Navy's Pacific field during World War II. For what it's worth, my father served in Army's Pacific field during World War II. I know from personal experience the impact that Japan's surrender had on those who fought the war. Louie continued serving his country afterwards, and contributed to both civic society and local churches in extraordinary ways. He helped build a a better world, strengthening the peace, increasing the faith, and committing himself to service of his neighbor. He lived out Jesus' new commandment to his disciples at the Last Supper: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

The responsorial psalm for this Mass is a beautiful way to reflect on Louie's life: "Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own." God knows everyone's heart and everyone's deeds. We trust in his holy name. We use that psalm today because in the first reading Paul reminds the Corinthians and us that God causes growth where others have planted seed. We are God's co-workers, God's field, God's building. God has called us to follow him, and as the last verse of this psalm poignantly says, "Our soul waits for the Lord."

We can imagine Louie praying those words throughout his life. He followed his conscience, strove to do God's will, and summoned more strength than you'd think his frail body could muster. But throughout all his days he could pray "Our soul waits for the Lord." Even now as we remember Louie's faithful life, we pray that God will have mercy on him so that his soul need wait no longer, but gain the peace that comes from rest in God alone.

God has blessed all of us by calling us his people. As our souls wait for the Lord to come, let us pass our days as Louie did in prayer to God and love of neighbor.

Wednesday, September 2, 2020