

Carole's makeup was so good I never paid much attention to it. She always seemed one with her appearance and the world around her. She was a loving wife and a good mother. She was active here at church, but she never drew attention to what she did. She just seemed to be a natural part of the world. And yet she worked very hard. She was a devoted homemaker and a good cook. She worked occasional part-time jobs, but she just wanted to raise a family, be part of a community, play golf and pet cats. She kept a lot of balls in the air, but she made it look effortless.

I arrived in Cameron in the summer of 2001, and I cannot tell you how many people have said to me what a shame it was I never got to meet Leroy. He died 6 weeks before I got here. He was a very important part of this parish, and people here still miss him. If these people missed Leroy, I can only imagine how much Carole missed him. In the last 5 years Carole has faced a series of physical setbacks, hospitalizations, and moves from one nursing home to another. But through it all, she loved her family, she loved her community, she loved her church, and she made herself at home wherever she was.

I'm sure what kept her going was her love for Leroy and her faith that one day she would see him again in the land of the living, where Christ the Good Shepherd would call them home. In the first reading this morning, Job has undergone a series of misfortunes. He had every reason to be angry at God, but he wasn't. Instead his faith only grew stronger. "I know that my Vindicator lives," he says; "I know that he will at last stand forth upon the dust. My own eyes shall behold him, and from my flesh I shall see God. My inmost being is consumed with longing." Job recognized in his misfortunes that the disquiet he felt inside was not really emptiness; it was a longing. It was proof that there was a God who loved him still, and Job longed to see God standing as a victor upon the dust. He never let go of that firm faith.

In the gospel, Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus to two disciples who do not recognize him, changed as he was by the resurrection. On the road, he teaches them about the scriptures, and when they get to the end of their journey, he breaks bread with them. In that eucharist, they finally recognize the Jesus of the Last Supper, the one who promised to be with them until the end of the ages. As much as Carole enjoyed going places and Leroy enjoyed being a communion minister, I'm sure this passage meant a lot to them both. On their many travels together, they enjoyed each other's company, but they also discovered Christ in their midst, and they recognized him Sunday after Sunday in the breaking of the bread.

Today we escort Carole on her final journey. And we pray that Christ will be her companion again. We pray that she who served the Lord throughout her life, never calling attention to herself, but doing everything she could for others, will find that Jesus has not overlooked her. And as we continue our journey, let us recommit ourselves to serve one another, to sacrifice for those we love, and to keep our faith firm in Christ, who stands over the dust of our lives as our Vindicator, Savior and Lord.

