

Scott Ford

Whether you were a member of his family, a lifetime friend, a musician, a dancer, a police officer, a motorcyclist, a crawler, a Jeeper, a lover of rodeos, a soccer enthusiast, a Star Wars fan, a member of cathedral parish, an advocate for the homeless, or a Knight of Columbus, you could not avoid meeting and loving Scott Ford. His personality lit up a room. He loved people, and people loved him. He was more than pleasant company, he was a brother. He cared for people, protected them, supported them, and aimed to make their lives better. Scott faced challenges in his private life, but he used them to make the world a better place. He crammed a lot into life, as if he knew he had to make these years count.

None of this fits the way Scott died. If God had revealed to him that his death would injure three children, that would have killed Scott before he died. Scott gave us an important lesson at the end of his life. Don't be too quick to size anybody up. Whether they are saints or sinners to you, everybody is both. Some people die for their values; we honor them as martyrs. Others die differently, accidentally, carelessly. The manner of their death may overshadow the manner of their life. That is not fair. With Scott, I truly believe we'll remember not the way he died, but the way he lived.

People wrestled with this even in the days of the Old Testament. The Book of Wisdom struggles to explain why someone who lived justly died early. Many people interpreted an untimely death as a waste. The Book of Wisdom cautions, don't measure a person's worth "in terms of years." Some people gain understanding before their hair turns gray. Those who live a clean life have already attained in their youth the benefits of old age. The Book of Wisdom says of a just person, "Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career." Then it says honestly about everyone else, "But the people saw and did not understand, nor did they take this into account."

If you feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit the imprisoned, you can make a short life a complete life. Still, each of us is saint and sinner. For all the good we do, we each fail to love our neighbor as fully as we could every day. We sometimes put ourselves, the people we love, and complete strangers at risk.

Both our bodies and our souls are corruptible. Our bodies deteriorate physically after we die, and our souls can deteriorate morally while we live. Yet, St. Paul says, "the dead will be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed."

If Scott could speak right now, he would thank us for loving him, and ask us to practice his daily habits: Pray to God. Care about your neighbor. Throw yourself completely into the people and activities that give you life. Develop your gifts. Bring music to others. Promote law and order. You may not do it all perfectly, but do it, and you'll make a difference in the lives of others.

We have gathered here to plead for our friend and to thank God for his life. We pray that God will have mercy on Scott's soul and give him the reward Christ promised to those who cared for the least: a place at his right hand where the guitars are in tune, the embraces are tight, and forgiveness heals whatever is broken in those who lived and died as sinner and saint.