

On behalf of all of us at St. Munchin I want to extend my condolences to all Jody's family. Greg, Bryan and Julie, I don't know if you remember this, but while we were sitting on my front porch a few days ago, the mailman made a delivery. When I got around to opening that mail I discovered a letter in there from the Internal Revenue Service. It said that according to their review of my 2004 tax return, I owed the IRS an additional \$34,000. They've made a mistake, but I couldn't help wondering if Jody was having a little fun with me from beyond the grave.

Anyone who can figure out our tax system in this country has my respect. Jody could do that and more. She was a trusted employee, a good neighbor, and from gardens to children she helped things grow. Her life was not always beautiful, but she created beauty around her. She kept the best front yard in Cameron.

She also kept quotes. Her family found about 20 of them this week, and we wanted to share them with you. They are filled with good advice: Be forgiving of yourself and others. Be generous. Have a grateful heart. Be bold and courageous. When you look back on your life, you'll regret the things you didn't do more than the ones you did. Take good care of those you love. Don't do anything that wouldn't make your mom proud.

St. Paul had some favorite sayings, too, such as the one that opens our first reading this morning: "Hope does not disappoint." Paul realized that no matter what sins he had committed, God still loved him. No matter how many mistakes he made, there was hope for him. Jesus loved us enough to die for us while we were still sinners. So we have hope, and hope does not disappoint.

Jesus says as much in John's gospel: "I will not reject anyone who comes to me. This is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day."

Everybody faces difficulties in life. Our health is not always what we wish it were. We fall in love and then out of it again. Dreams we held dear are taken away from us against our will. There are things we can do to face those difficulties. We can be bold and courageous. We can concentrate on the relationships that are going well. We can grow a garden as big and beautiful as we can make it. But under it all, we need something more. We need a special kind of hope, a hope that does not disappoint, even when other people do.

Christ is that hope. Jody welcomed Christ into her heart, where he helped her hope for a better day. We gather today with faith in Christ and hope in his promises, that he will guide Jody safely home where flowers will grow while she takes her rest.