

When I first met Catherine a couple years ago, I assumed she had lived in Cameron all her life. She embodied much of what this town stands for – love of family, concern for your neighbor, the importance of faith, volunteerism, the enjoyment of what larger cities can offer, but the comforts of community life and small businesses at home. It seemed like she had lived here forever, because so many people knew her, admired her and enjoyed her company.

Catherine threw herself into everything. She gave herself up for her children and grandchildren. She made time for kids because she never lost the child within her. She brought life to them and they gave life to her. She helped at church and she prayed with us here every morning to start her day.

As Catherine grew ill, she devoted herself completely to her treatment, even when it was hard. She followed her regimen with the determination and optimism that marked many other areas of her life.

And when the time came for her to die, Catherine gave herself completely to that too. She took her rest when God called her home.

Catherine brought joy and exuberance to her life and to yours. I know this can't be true, but it seemed as though the only times she wasn't happy were the times when she was *really* happy. She had a lot to live for and she thanked God for her blessings.

St. Paul says nothing will separate us from the love of Christ. Every one of us faces anguish, distress, persecution and peril. None of it separates us from love. Paul says, "I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor present things, nor future things, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God." Nothing. If we know that we'll have peace of heart.

Jesus said we should live like servants ready to open the door whenever the master comes and knocks. If servants are vigilant, Jesus says, when the master gets home, "he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them." It's a beautiful image for Catherine. She served other people; now Christ her master seats her at table so he can wait on her.

We gather for this funeral during Advent, the season when our church reminds us we are waiting for the Second Coming of Christ, and we'd better be ready whenever he comes and knocks. We will be ready if we devote our lives to faith, family and service of others.