

## Sharon Kisel

**That gospel passage remains challenging no matter how many times we hear it. It offers a checklist of works of mercy that we sometimes fulfill and sometimes don't. As we reflect back on Sharon's life today, we can take comfort that she listened up whenever these words were laid down. Her love for those in need crystallized in her adult life as she cared for her own children, and it extended to other people's children in local Catholic schools. Here at the cathedral she prepared takeaway meals for those who could not afford to eat, and then unexpectedly started caring for her own husband during his illness, to a degree she probably never imagined when Sharon took Bob on her wedding day for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad. She did all this with a willing heart as a natural exponent of her good character. We take comfort thinking about Sharon in relation to that gospel.**

**We can also take comfort, as St. Paul bids us in his First Letter to the Thessalonians, that those who have fallen asleep in Christ "will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord"—and, we pray, with our beloved deceased brothers and sisters.**

**The Christian faith holds out this amazing hope that just as Christ rose from the dead to enter new life, so those who die in him will achieve the same result. All he asks of us is faith and its expression in deeds, especially for those in need of what we have.**

**Sharon quilted. She used this talent to perform deeds for others. Quilting takes time and attention. Those who enjoy it often have a specific aim in mind—a person for whom they are weaving this particular quilt—in Sharon's case, various members of her family. A quilt provides the physical warmth of protection from the elements, as well as the emotional warmth of the love of its weaver. Bob also got drawn into quilting, where he could experience the same values.**

**At first today's prophecy from Isaiah seems to contrast with what quilting means. Isaiah reflects about something we humans share, mortality, and something God alone possesses, the power to "destroy death forever." To explain death, Isaiah calls it "the veil that veils all peoples, The web that is woven over all nations." As threads become strong when woven together, so the prospect of death forms a strong woven web that unites every human being. With the coming of Christ, we believe that God has destroyed death forever, wipes away "the tears from all faces," as Isaiah says, and removes "the reproach of his people... from the whole earth." In destroying one woven web, God himself provides another woven quilt, a blanket of eternal life, wrapping each person he created in the warmth of hope and love.**

**As we express our gratitude today for Sharon's life and the countless ways she demonstrated the best of what humans have to offer, let us place our hopes in Christ, who tops our best with his own. May Sharon hear the words, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father." And may we, inspired by her life and deeds, follow the example of those we believe already live with the Lord that we may live with them forever.**

Saturday, March 2, 2024