

## Robert Burke

**Bob was still a kid when his parents started the much respected Burke Travel Agency. My dad worked for Braniff International, and I remember using Burke Travel long before I met Bob. And, like my dad, I was born in New Orleans, long before Bob had developed a taste for Mardi Gras. Bob has been a member of this cathedral parish for decades. His grandparents were married here. As a young man he lived downtown, heard the bells one day, and felt that they were personally summoning him. A travel agent familiar with planes in the air and trains in Europe, he walked to the accompaniment of those bells from his apartment over here—the shortest trip of his life, but one that made a profound impact on thousands of people. Bob helped us generously; he served as a reader, communion minister, decorator, and any other role we needed. I remember him driving over here in a snowstorm just because he was supposed to proclaim the scriptures that day. Each of you has your own stories about Bob’s generosity of spirit. He was genuinely humble and relentlessly upbeat. When travel agencies hit upon hard times first due to expanded access to information online and then the Covid-19 pandemic, Bob just kept being Bob. Of course these were difficult times, but he absorbed each day as just another day barely afflicting a lifetime of days that he considered abrim with blessings.**

**Bob gave generously; he received generously as well, especially from people like Jill, his siblings, and extended family. Your care for him these last few months demonstrates the impact Bob had on your lives and how much he will be missed.**

**Bob could justly reflect back on his life as did Saint Paul: “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.” In spite of many challenges, he kept a peaceful demeanor filled with the positivity of hope.**

**We pray now that the Lord will bestow upon Bob the crown of righteousness that awaits those who remain faithful to Christ and long for his appearance. Saint John paints a beautiful image of that day: he “saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.... God himself will always be with [his people] as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away.”**

**At the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples, “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” We use this passage each year on Holy Thursday during the washing of the feet, where Jesus modeled love. Bob imitated that model of service, modeled it himself, and drew people like us to practice service with him.**

**Brothers and sisters, after the shock and sadness of Bob’s illness and death, the fog will lift over a landscape of indelible memories featuring his smile and companionship. He puts his life today into the hands of the greatest travel agent, Jesus Christ, who escorts his faithful ones to a vacation paradise beyond the wonders of the world. As we thank God for Bob’s life, let us continue his example: generous service, undaunted hope, and joyous love.**

Tuesday, April 16, 2024