

Graciela Lazen

In recent years one of our great joys at the cathedral has been watching Graciela Lazen walk through the front door each weekend with a smile on her face and friendly words of greeting. She loved coming over here, and we loved having her as a neighbor.

Although Graciela lived right next door, her original home was farther away. She came to us from the country of Chile, a country known for its mountains, and from a city named for a mountain, Montenegro. Still, she ended up making Quality Hill her home and found great contentment here. A woman of strong faith, she kept God close to her heart and did not stray from her beliefs, contemplating the hope in eternal life that Jesus promised those who follow him.

The first reading we heard today consoles those who lift their eyes beyond the troubles of this world to the glories of the next. Isaiah envisions a mountain that the Lord has come to favor. As clouds and mist lift to reveal that mountain's majesty, Isaiah imagines that the Lord is removing a veil. He describes that veil as a web woven over all nations, something that binds together every human being, no matter our native country, the web of mortality.

Isaiah turns this bleak realization into endless hope, declaring that the Lord "will destroy death forever." Throughout our lives we ask God to preserve our health and to fend off our death. We don't want to leave here. We enjoy the beautiful world God has created and praise God for the blessings it provides. We ask God to save us, and Isaiah says that the day will come when the veil lifts from the mountain of God's grandeur. Instead of crying out in despair, we will say in hope, "This is the Lord for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us."

We are sad to lose Graciela and her contagious smile. We will miss her heartfelt desire to put her skills at the service of others, making their homes more comfortable. Yet we rejoice in the promise of Isaiah that God too has a contagious smile and longs to make our eternal home more worthy.

May Graciela rest in peace. May her memory inspire us to open our hearts and homes to others. May her faith in God be rewarded. May God pull back the veil of death to reveal the majesty of his loving, eternal plan for her and for us.