

Some of our most faithful volunteers at the cathedral these days use a proud expression to describe themselves. They tell me they come with the building. That's how I remember Bob. When you walked in here, Bob would be there. He just came with the building. We are not the only ones who felt that way. However you knew Bob, you probably remember how loyal he was to you. Whether you've known him since he was in grade school or since last week, you had a friend who shared your interests, enjoyed your company, made you laugh, got you thinking, modeled service, and made you believe in Santa Claus. He was a valued part of countless relationships.

Here, of course, we were especially moved by Bob's faith in God and the way he put it into action. He became a face of the cathedral for longtime members and onetime visitors. He demonstrated how important it is for the various parts of a person's life to fit together. If you have faith, then kindness should show up in the way you treat other people. If you marry someone, you should stand by their side in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. If you get lonely, you should find a positive way to put your life on track.

Bob learned a lot of these skills because he followed Christ. From his childhood, he was active with his faith at church and in school. St. Paul wrote eloquently about Christ in the passage we just heard from the Letter to the Romans. God "did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all." Jesus demonstrated faith, love and service throughout his life, so Paul was able to conclude, "It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us." Even in death, the risen Christ continued to show his power, but also his desire to improve the lives of others.

Some people feel separated from the love of God because of what they suffer. This was true even in Paul's day. Paul himself suffered a litany of illnesses, mishaps, attacks and transgressions. He asked if anguish, distress, or any other peril could separate us from the love of Christ, and answers very beautifully, no: "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." For Christians this becomes an especially powerful belief when someone we love has died. We feel loss, shock, even anger. But we also sense this powerful love of Christ that stretches across time to replace death with gratitude.

As Bob came with this building, so Christ came with Bob. May Bob's soul now reach the portal of the eternal dwelling place of Christ. There may he find rest and the fulfillment of the promise for which he hoped. May we too find consolation in this time of grief, that we may experience what St. Paul proclaimed: nothing separates us from love.