Every year on March 22nd I used to dial 333-8055 to deliver a simple message: Thank you for giving us Dave. I could have said that to Bud and Teresa about any of their kids because all the Schwartze children were pretty amazing, which tells you a lot about their parents—who were friends with my parents.

Teresa managed to be at peace, seemingly all the time. It feels tautologous today to pray "rest in peace" because she's been doing that all her life. She faced some of the greatest losses a parent can have. She surely felt everything you're supposed to feel when you lose a child—when you lose two children: anger, incredulity, weariness, deprivation, grievance. But you'd never know it. It wasn't that Teresa repressed those feelings within herself or concealed them from us. Those feelings just never had a chance to survive against the bulwark Teresa erected: faith, hope, love, confidence, vision, responsibility, and joyful appreciation of the gift of the world around her. She grasped the purpose of life in all its beauty. The bad days only showed her how powerful the good days ultimately were.

For the second reading today, the family chose a passage from St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy. A lot of people like it at funerals because it has a sort of "I did it my way" feel to it: "I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith." Even so, the line of this passage that especially fits Teresa comes before those words. It's where Paul gives advice to young Timothy how he should live his life: "But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry." Paul could have given that advice to Teresa, and she could respond she checked every box.

Would we pass the same test? Are we self-possessed in all circumstances? Or just in the ones when things are going well? Do we put up with hardship? Or do we complain about it? Do we perform the work of an evangelist? Or do we leave that for others to do? Do we fulfill our ministry? Well, what is our ministry? Have we even figured out what it is, much less whether we've fulfilled it?

Teresa gave us a tremendous example of how to live. Sometimes she spoke words of wisdom to us. More often she just lived in a way you wanted to be part of, hoping you could scrape off some of her goodness and rub it on your own life. We all have work to do to live the way of peace.

Teresa was mother to eight wonderful children. She was a spiritual mother to countless others. With a smile, a lot of us called her "Mother Teresa." If you tried to pin that name on a lot of people, it wouldn't stick because few people have very much in common with Mother Teresa of Calcutta. But there were times when you had to wonder if people called the saintly founder of the Sisters of Charity "Mother Teresa of Calcutta" because she was so much like Mother Teresa Schwartze. We were blessed to know her and graced by her presence. She knows how to rest in peace. May she keep it up. And may her memory help each of us fulfill our ministry as God made us and called us to do.