

The Pastor's Column - July 27th, 2023



This past Saturday, we celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial for Parishioner Ed Pon. The church was filled with family, friends, and parishioners. This is extraordinary when you account for the fact that Ed and his husband Joe Cooper split their time between New York City and San Francisco. At their parish in San Francisco earlier that week there was another packed house for a funeral Mass there.

Ed lived life to the full. His love of God and Joe overflowed to so many people, in so many places, and in a very special way, their two parishes. Ed's memory will endure in the hearts of those who were blessed to know him for years to come. We here are grateful for the many ways Ed's faithfulness, wisdom and professional experience helped elevate our liturgies as well as our operations behind the scenes.

Fr. Gil Martinez, our former pastor, offered the funeral homily both East and West to two very sad, yet faithful congregations. It was truly exquisite. His reflection on the Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 1-12), which Ed selected for his funeral, was particularly illuminating and comforting:

*Jesus is not asking us to 'try hard to live the beatitudes.'
If he was saying that, he would be wrong.
Mourners often go un comforted,*

*the meek most often don't inherit the earth,
those who long for justice
frequently take that longing to the grave.*

*The beatitudes are not a moral vision.
They are the vision of God's eternal love for us.
The beatitudes are good news, not good advice.
They are gospel for an upside-down world,
for broken hearts, not hollow words of comfort.
They are Jesus declaring as St. Paul reminds us in Corinthians:
We walk by faith!*

*The living God is doing a new thing.
Jesus is turning the world 'right side up.'
The beatitudes boldly tell us that heaven is breaking
into our world in this present moment.
The present 'earth' is transforming
into the place of beauty and delight that God always intended.*

*We should not wait until we die to see heaven.
The future is here.
It arrived when Jesus walked among us and
when he gave his life in the undying love of the Resurrection.
The promises of the beatitudes summon us to live in the present.
Heaven is already breaking through!*

*Ed had a way of transforming the present moment
into a little piece of heaven.
If you were ever at Ed and Joe's for dinner,
a simple meal would be transformed into a feast
of endless food and wine.
How did they do that?!
Their planning and preparation seemed effortless,
as effortless as God's desire to love us.*

Thanks for your words, Fr. Gil! May the angels lead Ed to paradise and comfort the sorrowing with peace.

God bless you,

Fr. Eric

Rev. Fr. Eric Andrews, CSP
Pastor, Church of St. Paul the Apostle (NYC)