

Betty Teske's Requiem Mass

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 01] Psalm 90 verse 12 says, Lord, teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom. I thought about these words and this prayer from the psalmist numerous times over the past month.

Betty had a very difficult year leading up to her final days here on earth. During this time and especially this past month, she was contemplating on eternity.

Every time I met with her and we were alone, Betty would talk to me about what she was doing and preparing to be with her Lord. She told me that she was confessing her sins and that her trust and her hope was in Jesus Christ.

It's fitting that we are having Betty's Requiem as we begin our journey in Lent. Betty teaches us on how we are to face death.

When Betty made the decision to enter into hospice care, she did this with the awareness of two things.

[1 : 26] First, she knew that she was not getting better. She knew that her body was giving out. That her body was telling her that the end of her earthly journey was about to reach its conclusion.

Second, she had prepared herself by confessing her sins, by believing in Christ, and regularly receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Betty picked the psalm that we read responsibly this morning or this afternoon. I want to reread a portion of Psalm 46. I think this psalm will help you better understand why Betty was ready to finish her life and to get on with eternity.

Listen as I read from Psalm 46. God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear. Even though the earth be removed. And even though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

[2 : 46] Though its waters roar and be troubled. Though the mountains shake with its swelling. There is a river. Whose streams make glad the city of God.

The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Be still. And know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. Betty believed this with all her heart. She believed rightly that there is no better place to be than in the arms of our good shepherd and our Lord Jesus Christ.

[3 : 44] And the reason for this is because Betty truly believed in what we heard from our epistle reading. From 1 Thessalonians chapter 4.

Listen again as I read these words. But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep. Lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again. Even so, God will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

Beloved, this is the comfort that Betty possessed. She believed what our Lord said in our gospel reading. Let not your hearts be troubled.

The reason? Because her Lord. Her Savior. Jesus. experienced the pain.

[4 : 53] The agony. The suffering. The rejection from others that culminated in his death upon a cross. But Jesus did not merely die as a martyr.

He defeated death. He conquered death. By rising from the grave. And now he gives eternal life to all. Who put their faith and their trust in him.

Friends, that is the gospel. That is the good news. And that's what Betty believed.

Betty went to be with our Lord on March 1st. And that is when life really began for Betty.

Betty is still growing in communion with her God as we all are. But her faith, her hope, is in the God who became man. The God who experienced death in the grave.

[6 : 01] And the God who destroyed death. Destroying its power. In 2015, I had just been here maybe two or three months.

Her husband, Frank, died. I did his funeral. Afterwards, Betty met with me. And she had written out her entire funeral wishes.

She picked readings and hymns. And that this is very Betty. She wrote and underlined the words, Short homily okay.

So I'm going to honor Betty's wishes and start wrapping this up. But before I do, I'm going to follow Betty's example by being very blunt.

Very blunt with you all. Betty was a hard worker. She was a devoted mother. She loved her family. She was also a no-nonsense type of woman.

[7 : 08] And that's what we all loved about Betty. But the most important thing that mattered was her faith. And this was not a mere private devotion for Betty.

She loved this church. Not because of the stained glass windows. Not because of the beautiful stone exterior. Betty loved this church because she received Christ in this church in the sacraments.

Church was not simply nostalgia for Betty. Betty was not that type of person. Betty was united in Christ in the Holy Eucharist where he dwelt with her and she in him.

She loved learning. She loved growing in her faith. And so here's my blunt words inspired by Betty Teske. Life is more than work.

It's more than your bank account. It's more than your leisure. Life is about the love, the hope, and our faith in Jesus Christ who overcame death and the grave.

[8 : 27] who says, I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life, and no one comes to the Father except through me.

It's not by trying to just be a good person, be a good citizen. It's about believing and trusting in Christ and not putting trust in ourselves.

Betty believed this. And that's why she was not afraid to leave this life. Betty believed in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

And in the end, friends, that's all that matters. So may we all pray the words of the psalmist asking our Lord to teach us to number our days so that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

And let us prioritize, like Betty, that which is eternal as we now prepare to meet our God.

[9 : 35] Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.