

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

St. John records the words of Martha's mourning. Martha knew the pain of losing someone she loved. It is a pain that you too know, for all men must face death. In her sadness, in her anguish, in the face of death, Martha trusted in Christ. That's what faith does. Faith believes that God is love. Faith believes that God is life. Faith trusts in God for salvation.

But the God in which faith trusts is not a generic god. It is not the god in which the fallen world believes. Martha trusted in Jesus Christ, the only True God, the Eternal God, the Incarnate God, the God who took on Flesh and was made Man. And God the Son, the only Savior, answered that trust. Because saving faith always receives its reward.

“I AM the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”, the Lord promised. It is a strong, miraculous promise, a promise that shatters the bars of death. It is a promise that stirs faith and gives birth to hope in those who know the pain of death.

But that promise is not only for Martha. It is a promise for you. It is a promise for all who have the faith that Martha had, faith in Christ, saving faith. And that promise was for Kathleen, for in His great love for her, God granted Kathleen saving faith..

Kathleen believed in Jesus Christ. She believed that He took on Flesh, and that He was crucified and died for her sins, and for the sins of the world. She believed that He died for her. And she believed that He took up His life again on the third day, rising from the dead. She believed that He is Who He promised to be: the Resurrection and the Life.

That's why Psalm 27 meant so much to Kathleen. She saw in those Words the promise of salvation. Those Divine Words brought her comfort in her affliction: “The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

So the promise of Christ is Kathleen's promise. It is faith's promise. And this day, even in the face of loss, and of pain, and of the heartache and emptiness of losing someone you love, it is your promise. Rod, Tony, Dana, Rose, family and friends of Kathleen, all you who loved her and feel death's sting this day. You are not without hope.

Christ's promise is the source of your hope, for He who promised is Faithful. The Lord keeps His promises. When He made that life-giving promise to Martha, He asked her “Do you believe this?” Kathleen believed. And she confessed that belief. Every time Kathleen knelt at this rail to receive the Body and Blood of her Lord, she answered with Martha “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is come into the world.”

Week after week, year after year, Kathleen faithfully came to this very Nave to hear the Word of God, and to receive the forgiveness that Christ alone can give. Week after week, year after year, she came to this altar to receive the forgiveness of her sins, and to have her transgressions pardoned. She came here, to this altar, to receive the Gifts that Christ has promised to give, the very Gifts by which God has promised to bring to fallen men the grace, the love, the forgiveness,

the mercy, the hope, and the everlasting life that God alone can give. Each time she drew nigh unto this altar to receive Christ, Kathleen confessed the Lord's death until He comes. As often as she did so, she did so in remembrance of Him. Because that's what faith does.

Today, with Martha, we feel the pain of losing someone that we loved. It is difficult to lose a mother, a sister, a Grandmother, a trusted, life-long friend. It's hard. It hurts. But for you there is hope. There is hope in the Word of Christ. There is hope in the Promise that whoever believes in Him will live, the very promise that Kathleen believed.

And so it is with joyful confidence that we can proclaim this day that Kathleen is not dead. She lives. She lives because Christ lives. She lives because His promise is hers. Her soul is with Christ her Lord. Her suffering is ended, her mind is clear, she knows no doubt, no anxiety, no confusion. She knows only joy, and peace, and felicity. She is with God. And she is with Kay.

She is with all those who have gone before her with the sign of faith, with Sherman and Catherine, in that gleaming heavenly host that surrounds the throne of the risen and victorious Lamb, in unending worship and praise. So take heart, you who loved Kathleen, for you who have the faith that Martha confessed, the faith that sustained Kathleen in her earthly life, you will be with Kathleen again.

But for now we are still here. It is ours, for a time, live out our lives in this fallen world. And while this day we lay these earthly remains to rest in God's acre, while this day tears may be our lot, we know that the testimony of the Apostle is true. In that testimony we find comfort. For the Apostle testifies that Kathleen sleeps. She sleeps until that glorious day when the God in whom she believed, Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God who died and rose for her, returns.

On that Day He will fulfill His promise. Just as He died and rose again, just as He called Lazarus forth from death to life, so also will He bring with Him all those who sleep in Christ. He will bring with Him Kathleen. For He will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

Then all those who laid down believing His promise, those who fell asleep in faith, will rise. And all those with faith in Christ will receive transformed, heavenly bodies, and be ushered in the brilliance of the Lord's train into eternity with God in heaven.

So take heart, dear Christian. Take heart, all you who loved Kathleen. Death is defeated. Sin is defeated. The devil is defeated. Christ is victorious. And that victory He freely gives to those with faith in Him. He offers the same promise to you, that you hear and believe, and that you know the hope and joy that Kathleen knew.

Thanks be to God, that in His mercy, Kathleen has been brought into Christ's nearer presence, the land of the living. May that sure promise be your comfort and your hope this day, and every day until the Lord returns.

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