

Homily at the Burial Mass for Sr Rosemary Micka preached by Michael Luke Lubben, OFM

I met Sr Rosemary only a few years ago. And I wonder—about that little 6 year old girl, sitting at her desk at St Anthony's School in St Louis; about that teenager at St Anthony's High School. About that young lady who entered the Sisters of Divine Providence, about that Sister who went on to college and then spent much of her life in the field of education—principal teacher.

By now, she has been touched by time, as all are who have been given length of years. As Paul tells us: "We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God". It is eternal, in heaven.

Throughout her length of years, Sr Rosemary touched many lives, even toward the last of those years. Sr. touched many at the Villa. In her quiet suffering, as her body failed, one could sense her spirit, her joy, her dignity; all because she knew she was a child of God.

She took to heart early in life and kept to the end the words of the Master, related to us from John this day: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me."

Because of Sr Rosemary's belief, her faith, she will indeed be seated at the banquet table of our Lord. Jesus tells us, "...I go to prepare a place for you; I will come back and take you to myself so that where I am you also may be."

As we grieve for Sr Rosemary, we, at the same time, rejoice. "Do not let your hearts be troubled." If you take anything with you from this day, take those words of the Christ: "Do not let your hearts be troubled."

St Francis wrote in his Canticle of Brother Sun: "Praised be you, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no living one can escape. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm."

We Franciscans talk of being embraced by Sister Death, for death is not something to be feared—it is a sister for us. And so it was for Sr Rosemary, for the embrace of Sister Death is not the end of the story.

From the Song of Songs, we hear about a woman and her lover, her lover in this sense, being a shepherd. And we know who the Good Shepherd is. Sr Rosemary heard him. "My lover speaks; he says to me, 'Arise, My beloved, My beautiful one, and come!'"

The Preacher tells us: For everything there is a season, an a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die; a time to mourn and a time to dance.

We are gathered here to mourn, for Sr Rosemary has left us and we grieve. Yet, we are gathered here to dance, for as people of faith, we know that Sr Rosemary has entered into eternity to be with her God.

Sr Rosemary's own words on this are simple yet profound. She was once asked if she had any wishes she wanted to express, so she says to all of us:

I would like to thank you, my family, relatives and friends who helped me in my journey to my God. Also, I want to ask pardon of anyone I may ever have hurt or to whom I was negligent.