

In the late 1960's, the world's most successful and popular rock band, "The Beatles", recorded their last song together, "The Long and Winding Road". It was written by one of the four band members, Paul McCartney. According to historians and rock and roll scribes, McCartney was inspired by the sight of a road in the remote highlands of Scotland, where he owned property. The opening words of the song, which, in little time, climbed to the top of the Billboard charts, bear scrutiny on the day of a funeral of one who is dear to so many of us.

"The long and winding road that leads to your door will never disappear

I've seen that road before

It always leads me here

Leads me to your door"

For the disciple of Jesus, life is a long and winding road with many obstacles to be surmounted. A driver on a long journey may face potholes, icy conditions, detours, traffic congestion, fog and wild animals crossing the road. What's worse, He may discover that he is lost and does not know where to turn He can breathe a sigh of relief once he reaches his destination

Consider some key events from the New Testament:

In Luke's gospel, two disciples of Jesus walked with the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus unaware of their traveling companion's identity. Later they took the same road back to Jerusalem, where they related how Christ had revealed himself in the breaking of the bread;

Saint Paul, Christianity's first great pilgrim, encountered Christ on the road to Damascus.

Early Christians called themselves "followers of the Way" clearly they were inspired by the words of Christ, who identified himself as "the Way, the Truth and the Life" in John's gospel. In the Book of Acts, "The Way" is mentioned several times in connection with the followers of Christ.

And let us not forget the "Via Dolorosa", the way of sorrows, the road to Calvary in the Holy city of Jerusalem.

As a people of faith, we believe that life has a destination. Our homeland is in heaven. On the night before his death, Christ told his disciples of his intention to prepare a place for them in his Father's House.

Today, a funeral mass is celebrated for a man all too familiar with the road. A state Trooper for many years, Gene ensured the safety of our state's drivers and their passengers by enforcing the law. In addition, he was, according to his daughter, a traveler. As a faithful Catholic, he found himself from an early age on the "Highway to Heaven". He was a follower of "The Way". He walked the path of righteousness.

The road traveled by Gene and countless others leads to the door of the Heavenly Father's house.

May Our Lord have merciful judgment and when the hour of our death comes, may we be reunited with Gene at the gates of heaven.