

Funeral homily for Leonard Duffy:

Peace be with you!

In the words of the Hebrew poet, the Psalmist, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted" As you mourn the death of Leonard may the Lord bring you the consolation of his presence among us.

If you are at all familiar with motion picture Westerns, you will likely be knowledgeable of one of the classic scenes which often turn up on the screen: The cowboy riding off into the sunset. It usually marks the end of the story. A solitary figure, the cowboy faces west, where the sun sets at the end of the day. He has succeeded in accomplishing the task set out for him, the defeat of the bad guys, and is now ready to retire, if only for a period of time.

Will he appear again? Only if he reprises his role in another film!

In life, the Christian must ride into the sunset because his own sun is setting. His day is ending. He is ready to go home.

You may recall a popular song recorded by the English artist, Elton John: "Don't let the Sun go down on me. But sunsets are inevitable. And so is death.

Sunsets can be pleasing to the eye. They are often beautiful to behold. Death can be beautiful, too. A few days ago I was given the opportunity to administer "last Rites" to our brother in the faith, Leonard.

It was a sublime moment. His loving family gathered around his bedside and joined me in prayer for his last journey, a ride into the sunset.

In Saint Mark's account of Our Lord's Passion and death, we learn that "darkness covered the whole earth". The sun retreated. But only two day later, at daybreak, the risen Jesus appeared in all his glory. And that day was Sun-day. It is a reminder to us of our hope that Leonard will indeed rise again. Death does not have the last word. The words spoken to the sister of Lazarus comes to mind, "Your brother will rise again".

The sun will come out tomorrow. In eternity, there is no darkness, only light.

Lord, we commend the soul of Leonard to your infinite mercy.

May he rest in peace!