

Funeral Homily for Edward Carey, February 13th, 2021

In the Academy award winning film, "Amadeus", which is based on the life of the famous composer, Mozart, there is a poignant scene of his death at the age of thirty-five. Standing at his bedside is his devoted wife, Constanza, who is weeping. She is inconsolable. The background music one hears is a movement from his last work, the Requiem:

"Lacrimosa", a Latin word meaning tearful. The words are derived from an ancient hymn, the Dies Irae:

"That day of tears and mourning

From the dust returning

Man for judgment must prepare him

Lord, have mercy on him

Gentle Lord Jesus

Give them eternal rest"

It is said that three musicians and one soloist performed the Requiem at Mozart's bedside only hours before his death. When the movement "Lacrimosa" was heard, the great composer burst into tears, believing they were the last word he set to music.

Sacred scripture reminds us that there is a time for weeping and a time for mourning. The Psalmist says that God remembers every tear we shed: "Are my tears not stored in your flask, recorded in your book?" (Ps. 56:9)

In the New Testament, Jesus weeps three times.

In Saint John's account of the raising of Lazarus he notes that Jesus wept. The sight of his friend's tomb distressed him deeply. Those who observed him weeping remarked, "See how much he loved them". (Jn. 11:36) Why does the One who has power to restore life to the dead, weep? The nineteenth century scholar, Bishop John Henry Newman, suggests that he weeps from sympathy at Mary's tears. His emotional response is a gesture of "spontaneous tenderness". As the Son of Man, he enters into our grief and has a share in all our sorrows.

If we weep today, it is only because of our affection for the deceased, our beloved Edward. Death is a rupture. It causes a painful separation, though temporary. In the aftermath of his mother's death, the great bishop Saint Augustine conceded in his confessions that he wept and found consolation in shedding tears for the one largely responsible for his conversion. A man of faith, he was certain that in a day known only to God he would be re-united with his mother in paradise. Tears of mourning would then end, and soon to be replaced by tears of joy, which will last forever.

Those who mourn are blessed for they will be comforted. Death is swallowed up in victory for those who know Christ. Death does not have the final word.

In the Book of Revelation, the last book of the bible, the seer has a vision of the New Jerusalem. He writes, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain for the old order has passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

Edward Carey, a onetime teacher, taught his family how to believe and what to believe. He was an informed Catholic who treasured his faith and who lived according to the teachings of his master and the greatest teacher of all, Jesus Christ. He set a beautiful example for us all.

At the end of his life, Edward began reading Dante's great work, "The Divine Comedy". Of course, the culmination of this Christian classic is the "paradiso", a reference to heaven, our final destination.. I should like to think that the two men are now enjoy each other's company on the other side of earthly life.

Please, O Lord, grant my father's former classmate eternal rest. Have mercy on him who served you faithfully over a long life.

May perpetual life shine upon him!