

Funeral homily for Nancy Mullin Flaherty

On display at the National Museum of American history in our nation's capital is an hourglass, two feet in height that was once featured in a popular, long running daytime soap opera, "Days of Our Lives". As each episode begins, a graphic of the hourglass appears on the screen and one hears the voice of one of the principal actors, MacDonald Carey, utter the words, "Like sands through the hourglass so are the days of our lives".

The likely inspiration for the words introducing the viewer to the daily weekday program was a quotation taken from an ancient philosopher, Socrates, who wrote, "Our lives are but specks of dust through the fingers of time like sands of the hourglass all the days of our lives".

Life is very short. Shakespeare puts it this way in the mouth of King Macbeth: "Out, out, brief candle". In the Old Testament Book of Psalms, the poet makes an earnest appeal to God in prayer: "O Lord, make me know the shortness of my life, so that I may begin to achieve wisdom of heart".

Time, along with gravity, light and matter, is a great mystery. It is a word that is often heard in conversation. "Time flies", time's up', "time to go", "time is running out", "time out" and so much more. Even two popular songs speak of time: "Time is on my side" by the Rolling stones" and "Time in a Bottle" by Jim Croce.

We measure our brief years against the longer life of mankind and the eternity of God, God in infinite, without beginning or end. Our faith teaches us that we are on the edge of eternity at every moment of our lives. When the sands run out, our "time" has come, and we die. Our mortality helps us realize we have only a limited time to which to bring our lives to fulfillment.

For Nancy, who has crossed over to the other side of life, there is no more earthly time. The historical time of the world has run out. Eternal life beckons for a woman of deep faith, death is merely a door to everlasting joy in the presence of God. Christians no longer fear death, because we know what awaits us, a glorious resurrection.

In her illustrious life, Nancy distinguished herself as a loving wife and mother, and a woman of sound principles. According to one of her daughters she was a "fighter". Her many hours of prayer spoke well of her as a true disciple of Jesus. Her Eucharistic devotion and her love of the Blessed Mother also was praiseworthy.

Hers was a wonderful life.

When the sands of time run out in our lives let us pray that once again we are re-united with our beloved sister in the faith.

Although Nancy lived over eighty years in her earthly, time bound life, she lived constantly in the presence of God, who transcends time and space and who lives in eternity.

May she rest in peace!