

## Funeral homily for Patricia McDonald

A few weeks ago a former elementary school classmate of mine posted a message on her Facebook page, informing her friends that her twin sister had died after a short illness. Her posting elicited a compassionate response from so many. In my message of condolence, I wrote, "A door closes, another one opens" She was grateful for my words of consolation.

In so many of the great works of children's literature, a character who steps through an ordinary door finds himself in another world.

Let a few examples suffice.

Standing before a large green door studded with emeralds, Dorothy of Kansas and her three companions are given access to the emerald city of Oz and the mysterious wizard;

A young girl named Alice enters through a tiny door and finds herself in Wonderland; and

In the most famous story of all, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, a young girl, Lucy, is looking for a place to hide, and discovers a wardrobe closet. She passes through the door of the closet and enters the world of Narnia.

In Sacred Scripture there are many references to doors. In John's gospel, Jesus speaks of himself as a door. "I am the Door". He is the door of access. In Him and Him alone disciples enter into eternal life. "No one comes to the Father except through me", declared Jesus. Jesus triumphed over death, transforming it from a door slammed shut into one opened to whoever knocks.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of the need to be persistent in prayer: "Knock and it shall be opened for you".

In the Book of Revelation, the seer has a vision of heaven in which there are gates and doors.

"Behold, I have set before me an open door, which no one can shut; and "After this, I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven".

Imagine a world in which no doors open towards God. It is locked in on itself. It is a prison with no possibility of escape. It is the house of the dead!

Consider for a moment the most important doors in the life Pat McDonald;

First, the front door of her home comes to mind. When Pat opened the door, she welcomed guests, family members and strangers into her home. She was unfailingly kind and hospitable to all;

Second, the doors of the two most important churches in her life, Saint. Paul the Apostles and Sacred Heart Church, giving her access to the Divine mysteries celebrated at the altar of God;

Third, the doors of her heart. Pat welcomed Christ and allowed Him to make a home in her heart; and

Fourth, the pearly gates of Heaven, which are the portals of entry for those souls deemed worthy of admittance. The gate is opened that leads into the life that is everlasting. On the night of the Last Supper Jesus told his disciples that the House of the Heavenly Father has many rooms, and therefore, many doors and windows.

In his splendid homily spoken at Pope John Paul's funeral, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI), concluded his reflections by offering his listeners a luminous image of heaven. He said,

"None of us can forget how in that last Easter Sunday of his life, the Holy Father, marked by suffering, came once more to the window of the apostolic palace one last time gave his blessing

We can be sure that our beloved pope is standing today in the window of the Father's House, that he sees us and blesses us".

The Father's House is where God is, and is a lovely reference to our eternal destiny in heaven.

Pat McDonald was a loving mother and wife, a faithful parishioner, a woman of deep faith blessed with a sense of humor and a friend to many of our parish community.

I truly believe you are standing at the window of the Father's house, and praying for us.