

Funeral homily for Edith Laviano

If you are familiar with the games of basketball, football and hockey, then it is more than likely you know the meaning of the word timeout. When a coach or player calls for a timeout and it is granted by the umpire or referee, play is suspended for a short time. There is an official pause in the action. It affords the players a short break, and the coach an opportunity to review their performance in the game. The coach's strategy for winning the game may change, and the players would be expected to follow the coach's instructions, no questions asked. When play is about to resume the players return to the field, court or the ice rink.

Time outs are often sudden and unexpected.

The death of a loved one is very much like a timeout. Our daily routine is sadly interrupted. Life does not continue as usual. Death, often sudden and unexpected, brings home the importance of human life and helps us realize that all of us have a limited time to bring our life to fulfillment.

My earliest recollection of my first "timeout" came when I was in the fourth grade. My life took an unexpected turn when a frantic nun rushed into our fourth grade classroom and informed the teacher and her students that the then president, John f. Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. It seemed as if time stopped and the clock on the wall of the classroom stopped ticking. For the first time in my young life, I was introduced to the mystery of death. As a nine year old, I was unprepared to hear the tragic news. It was too sudden and unexpected.

After the timeout my life continued on its course. The tragedy was soon a distant memory.

Jesus spoke openly and often of His passion and death. No fewer than three times did He predict His passion. He wanted His disciples to be prepared. He did not want them to be caught unaware.

In today's gospel from John's fourteenth chapter Jesus offers words of farewell to His disciples. His hour had finally come. He told His disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled". But, as is so often the case, they were overcome by fear in the face of His imminent passion and death. He goes and prepares a place for them, a reference to the mystery of heaven.

This morning our church bells tolled for Edith Laviano. In a day known only to the Good Lord, it will toll for you and me.

Edith was a longtime resident of the East-side of Troy and was a faithful member of Sacred Heart church. She was also a loving wife and mother. Her death may have interrupted our daily routine but for Edith she is no longer bound by earthly time but has entered what we call eternity.

In our secular culture Christians are sometimes mocked for their belief in a life hereafter. The skeptic says, "What do you know about death?" and "Have you tasted death, been there?"

How do we respond? No, we have not experienced death, but we know someone who has, and has been raised from the dead. His name is Jesus the Christ.

Let perpetual life shine on Edith, Amen.