

Funeral homily for Matthew Breslin

One could reasonably argue that one of the saddest phrases in the entire Old Testament is a pithy reflection on one of life's great mysteries, namely, death. It's not likely to inspire good cheer and bring a smile to your face. One is left with a sense of hopelessness.

The phrase is "no more".

In the Book of Psalms, the Hebrew poet regrets the day when he will pass away forever:

"He will depart from this life and be no more".

He rues the day he will no longer be remembered by the God of Israel"

"like those forsaken among the dead, like those you remember no more".

In the book of the prophet Jeremiah, we read of one who grieves for the loss of a child:

"Rachel is weeping for her children because they are no more".

Is death the definitive end of life? Is the book of life closed for good? Is there no sequel or epilogue?

The Christian response to death is "more than", and not "no more".

For Christians Life is changed, not ended.

In the New Testament Jesus speaks of death in terms of life. In John's gospel, He says, "Unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies it remains just a grain of wheat, but if it dies it produces much fruit.

Whoever loves his life loses it and whoever hates his life in the world possesses life eternal.

Even for those without the gift of faith, there is an understandable curiosity about death's door.

Some of you may recall a popular television game show of years past, "Let's Make a Deal". What made this show so appealing to millions of viewers was, at least in part, the suspense of waiting to see what was behind the doors. Contestants readily surrendered cash for the opportunity to choose one of the doors. Behind a door may be an empty space (the booby prize) or a new car. Upon consideration, it was a risk worth taking.

Even for those without the gift of faith, there is curiosity about death's door. What is behind the door?

A black hole? An empty space? A bottomless pit?

As faithful Christians, we believe that behind the door of the father's House is a person: Jesus Christ. In the words of Saint Ambrose, "For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom."

We commend the soul of Matthew Breslin to Almighty God. When our earthly pilgrimage comes to an end, may we be re-united with him in our Father's house.

Please grant him a merciful judgment, O Lord.

Matthew, rest in peace!