

Eulogy - IRENE HUTT – Wednesday, January 11, 2017

St. Mark's Anglican Church – Halifax, N.S. - The Rev. John K. Morrell

We gather in this place on this day for a service of remembrance and anticipation. Last Sunday we celebrated the Epiphany following a major snowstorm here in Halifax. Epiphany is the season immediately after Christmas which begins with the visit of the Wise men or Magi to the Christ child, and their presentation of three gifts – gold for kingship, frankincense as an offering to God, and myrrh – a perfumed oil used to embalm bodies before burial. This coming Sunday we will remember the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by Jesus cousin John, called the Baptizer. With Jesus Baptism, he begins his three-year ministry, ultimately ending with his death on a Cross (Good Friday) and his bodily Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Jesus' life, as well as our lives, have numerous beginnings and endings.

Today we remember the life of a loved one and the promises of God made by the words and actions of his Son Jesus. And we anticipate the fulfillment of those promises in the life of her whom we mourn and in our own lives as well.

Our first reading from the letter of John reminds us that no matter how old we are, no matter how much good or bad we have done in our lifetimes, we are each one of us a child of God. This begins with our birth, but within the family of the Christian faith, a special journey begins when we are baptized.

The Gospel reading reminds us that our earthly life is not all there is. That our eternal soul lives on in the company of our heavenly father when we die. "For what my father want is that all who see the Son and believe in him should have eternal life. And I will raise them to life on the last day".

Throughout our service today, these thoughts will echo in the prayers, the communion liturgy and the commendation of the soul of Irene back to her heavenly father.

Irene was a daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother and cherished friend to many. She was a person who across many years gave of herself for the sake of others, loving, teaching, and nurturing at home, in the community, and her church. With her husband, George, she shared in his hopes and dreams until he was taken from her ten years ago.

All her children remember her as a "Mum," who changed their diapers, rocked them to sleep, helped get them to school functions, chaperoned their parties, ironed their shirts and dresses, fixed their meals, read them bedtime stories,

and kissed their hurts away. She took great joy in working for Avon, which not only got her out of the house, but enabled her to develop relationships with many in her community and church. In time, she became for them the model of what it means to be an honest, hard-working, sensitive, Christian adult. Now, if they live in the memory of her witness, she will live through them.

Many remember her as a neighbor, friend, volunteer or church member. In every role, she touched our lives with charm and wit, with courage and hope, with kindness and faith. We at this church recall with gratitude the long hours of volunteer activity she rendered in countless activities, especially with the formation and development of the Mother's Union. This love for her church revealed a deeper love for the Lord of the Church.

My wife Kathy and I visited her on her birthday before Christmas and found her struggling with her voice and finding it more difficult to get around. Last week, as she began her final struggles in this life, many family members had the opportunity to say, "Good-bye, at Ivany Place."

Now her physical body will soon be placed at her final resting place beside her husband. In the promise of God through his Son Jesus, we may find our ultimate strength to facing this loss and all others like it: the promise of life beyond this life in a place where there is no sickness, no sadness, and no death. The risen Christ has made provisions for those whom he loves. And he loves Irene. And last week when God released her only to open his arms wide to embrace her.

So today, though sad because she has left this mortal realm, we give thanks for her 91 years amongst us, for the blessings she has given to her children and grand children, and we celebrate her life amongst us within this church.

God, bless you Irene and I am so happy to have been your Pastor. AMEN.