

A EULOGY ABOUT NEIGHBOUR BOB (+2007)

by

Fr. Dr. Photios (W)

Bob's wonderful sister, Mary, and I have been married for over 46 years. Although he and I were not alike in many ways, we both had been blessed in love! His wife, Ellen, was the best thing that ever happened to him as my wife, our son, his wife and our granddaughter have been my greatest blessing from God. Our good women kept us somewhat on the proper path. Without them, we might have wandered aimlessly, seeking direction perhaps from the wrong places!

Bob, my brother-in-law, was much more than that to me. He inspired me with his resolute courage during his health trials of the last several years. Although he could seem a bit "crotchety" now and then, that was just Bob's rough exterior approach to facing life. Underneath this façade was a warm, kind person who would give you the shirt off his back!

He worked within the aviation industry, which is full of types like Bob, who show very intense loyalties to their fellow workers. This is true wherever their jobbing takes them: California, Florida, Oregon, Texas, or, even, Decatur, Alabama.

Bob was an excellent father, kind to his wife and children; yet, he would draw a line in the sand on behaviour to the kids. Of course, those who know that free-spirited Yankee wife of his realise that he might not have been so successful "laying down the rules" to her!

He loved Ellen and his children dearly and intensely. She loved him as her husband and acted as his principal caregiver for his many years of physical suffering. During those years, Bob never complained, just soldiered on. He would have been the last one to cry "Why me?"

Her caring for him is a prime example of the love for our neighbour. The love of our neighbour is crucial to True Christianity; for Christ commands us to love "thy neighbour as thyself" [St. Matthew 22:39]. Bob reconciled with everyone before his passing. Although he wasn't a Churchgoer, his *inner* heart was full of love for his mate, Ellen, his kids, relatives, fellow workers, and for anyone who sought reconciliation or suffered and needed help. His acts reveal a love for his "neighbour".

In the Gospel of St. John, Chapter 13: 34 and 35, Christ establishes a new commandment:

A new Commandment I give unto you,
That ye love one another; as I have loved you,
That ye also love one another.
By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples,
If ye have love one to another.

We are to love one another as Christ loves us. Christ sets the standard; we are to follow Him. In Bob's personal relationships with people, his immediate neighbours and others, he demonstrated his love for them over and over again.

What does the Lord require of us in relation to our neighbours?

Here are some Scriptural criteria, St. Luke 6: 37 and 38:

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven;

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure with which ye measure it shall be measured in turn to you.

What do these passages mean in practical terms?

We are not to look down on others. We are to examine ourselves. We are not to condemn others. If we do, we will be condemned ourselves. We are not to judge others. By judging others, we have transgressed the law:

The Lord, therefore, is saying this: if you do good to others, you will receive good by that same measure. The measure *running over* means that when you have done good on one occasion, you will receive good ten thousand fold. It is the same with judging others. He who judges another and then comes to be judged himself, receives by the same measure as he gave. Because he receives greater condemnation for having judged his fellow man, his measure also is *running over*.

[Blessed Theophylact's *Explanation of the Holy Gospel of St. Luke*, Vol. III (tr. From the original Greek by Fr. Christopher Stade, Chrysostom Press, P.O. Box 536, House Springs, MO, 1997, pp. 69-70.)]

One of the True Church's greatest Fathers, St. Basil the Great (+ 379), citing the Saviour expressed it this way:

He who loves his neighbour, fulfills the love he owes to God; for God *accepts* (emphasis supplied) this love as an act of love offered to Himself.

'For I hungered and ye gave Me to eat; I thirsted and ye gave Me to drink... (St. Matthew 25:35)';

'insofar as ye did it to one of the *least* (emphasis supplied) of these My brethren, ye did it to me (St. Matthew 25: 40)'

Bob was a good man who did good:

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; [St. Luke 6: 45]

We pray today that Bob's kindness and concern for his neighbours be favourably received by Our Lord. Please pray for Bob's soul. Your prayers mean a lot to him. Remember the words of the Apostle James the Just of Jerusalem:

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. [St. James 5: 16]

Our God is just, but His justice is not to be understood in a legalistic way. God is kind and His mercy trumps His justice. Has Bobby made a valiant effort to be a Christian neighbour even though he wasn't a Churchgoer? This is Our Saviour's call, of course. We humbly ask the Lord to accept Bob's soul and cover him with His boundless mercy.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.