

Homily

Mass of Christian Burial for Br. Leonard Zaworski, SCJ, September 13, 2023

Homilist: Fr. Jim Walters, SCJ

Life can be a parable. Like the parables Jesus used to teach, our lives can illustrate the values and ideals we hold dear to our hearts. In the Gospel reading, Jesus speaks to his disciples in the last moments of his life with them. He shares the parable of the seed that must die to produce fruit. He speaks of hating our life in this world to preserve it for eternal life. This morning we are faced with our greatest fear: death itself. We feel the pain of loss as we struggle to make sense of what we cannot understand.

We're reminded in the words of the Apostle Paul that whether we live or die we are the Lord's for by his death and resurrection, Christ is Lord of both the dead and the living. How does the parable of our life speak to this reality?

Lenny would hang a placard on his doorknob that read: "Don't disturb me, I'm disturbed enough already." It caught most of us off-guard and we'd laugh about it. But I believe there was an unspoken truth in these words for Lenny was disturbed! He was disturbed by the senseless suffering of those unjustly treated, whether it was the migrant worker, those forced to leave their homelands for fear of death squads or frustration at providing the basic needs for their families.

His decision to work with Valley Interfaith, his choice to serve in formation in India, his dedication to providing countless texts to help the blind and visually challenged access the resources that the seeing take for granted form his life parable, the seed that dies to produce fruit and, in dying to self, now shares in life eternal.

As our founder, Fr. Leo Dehon, once expressed life's parable in these words: "In imitation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus we must take part in the sufferings of our brothers and sisters. And as we are 'one heart and one soul in the Heart of Jesus' we, too, ought to be in some small way the heart of all our brothers and sisters." "My Retreat at Braisne," October 25, 1893

Lenny was in his way the heart of his brothers and sisters. Yes, many times we missed him at prayer and meals and wished he'd been more present in our community life, but it was in the hidden moments when he would reach out to employees and many others and make them feel valued.

As we celebrate Eucharist today may Lenny's life parable disturb our complacency and renew our hope that "adveniat regnum tuum," that your Kingdom may come among us.

"You have been told what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God."