

SERMON 924

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

988th Week as Priest

815th Week at St Dunstan's

80th Week at Epiphany-Tallassee

REMEMBERING ROSEMARY

Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Rosemary Dearth Dusi lived to the age of ninety-eight and died last Saturday. She was amazingly healthy and full of determination, up until the previous week, when she suffered a major stroke and was hospitalized.

Rosemary was a lady, slight of stature, but towering in strength and faith. She spoke frankly and with great clarity and insight, and you always knew where you stood with Rosemary. For more than sixty years, she belonged to the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, an Anglo-Catholic organization of clergy and laypeople committed to “frequent and reverent Celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, as the Chief Act of Divine Service.” Members dedicate themselves to a life of “faith, adoration, spiritual communion, thanksgiving, intercession, and prayer.” And now I know why she

would always say, “Thanksgiving. Just thanksgiving,” in our healing service. I heard those words from Rosemary Dusi countless times in recent years.

Four years ago this Lent, Julian and Rosemary Dusi came to me asking if we could have a Wednesday service of Holy Eucharist using the traditional language of the Prayer Book. And Rosemary wanted prayers for healing—not as some kind of magic act or superstition, but because she understood healing as sometimes a cure, but more often as a wholeness, a completeness—and a spiritual union with Christ.

Rosemary Dusi was very much a no-nonsense kind of person. She did not suffer fools gladly, and although she had a great wit and keen sense of humor, she was a most private and serious person on the whole.

She devoted her life to Dr. Julian Luigi Dusi, her husband of sixty-five years. Not in any slavish or subjugated sense, but as a full partner and confidant. Julian was Professor Emeritus of the Department of Biological Sciences of Auburn University, where he taught and did research in Mammalogy and Ornithology, for many years. He was a member of numerous scientific organizations and continued to publish research papers until his death three years ago. But Julian depended upon

his Rosemary for nearly everything. He was a gentle, kind, modest man—a scholar and teacher, a lifelong Episcopalian, and a devoted husband.

But Rosemary was a firecracker. She got things done. She accompanied him on every field study, every research trip. She took notes, typed his articles and manuscripts, organized his files, handled his correspondence, paid the bills, managed the investments, set the schedule, made appointments, and followed up on every detail. And that list only scratches the surface.

Rosemary was a powerhouse captured in the body of a ninety-eight pound lady. She was the heart and center of their relationship and the driving force in their life. And she made Julian a better man.

They never had children, and they seldom made friends. It's just about impossible to speak of one without the other—and when Julian died, Rosemary was never quite herself again. I know this sounds old-fashioned to some, but that's the way it was between them. They were an inseparable union in all things—research and field studies, bird watching, and daily life.

Rosemary could not have survived his loss these past few years without the competent help and loving-kindness of Robert Reams, Karen _____, and

Annie Stevenson. Robert became like the son they never had, and he would drive from Alexander City to their home on Sherwood Drive at all hours of the night and day. I owe them all a great debt for the help they gave me as the Dusis' pastor and priest.

So, here is what I have learned from knowing Rosemary Dusi ...

She loved her husband Julian, though she was neither demonstrative nor particularly gentle. I believe that she regretted this after his death, although she never said so.

Rosemary had a sharp mind and deep faith. But her faith was never sentimental or superficial. She was Anglican down to her bones, and she not only believed—she *knew*—that things should be done in good and decent order.

Rosemary was devoted and determined to do her very best in every single thing she ever committed herself to doing. She came from plain country folks in the hills of West Virginia, and she never put on airs or pretended to be something or somebody she wasn't.

Rosemary was frugal, and careful, and simple in her tastes and her interests. She dressed for work, not the

ball. She had no time for trivial matters. And she was as honest as the day is long.

And finally, I would say, Rosemary was a woman of faith. When she spoke of the “Holy Father,” you felt that she really knew him. When she spoke of gratitude and thanksgiving, she really meant it. And when she received the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, she did so with absolute devotion and humility.

Rosemary Dusi was the kind of parishioner that every good priest wants to have. **AMEN.**