

**The Souls of the Just  
Funeral – Wayne Mullan  
(Job; Wis 3)**

Visiting the apartment of my brother Wayne after his death, I found a copy of the Book of Job in his bedroom, which I had given him some time ago. Wayne had a strong interest in this book of the Bible, and told me how Job exemplified for him the encouragement and hope necessary for recovery, the two qualities he in turn shared abundantly with the people he served and worked with. Like Job, Wayne suffered many terrible things in his life, cruel misfortunes, the power of evil. Among other things, Wayne was afflicted with mental illness (schizophrenia). He was gravely injured physically when his house burned down. Wayne was subjected to a life of poverty.

Like Job, Wayne was chosen by God for a particular purpose, involving a struggle between good and evil much greater than a human being can comprehend. Like Job, Wayne was strengthened, and ultimately vindicated. As his peers who knew him and worked with him vouch, he was a soft-spoken, good, and kind man, smart, funny, and *always positive*. He never cursed God, others, himself, or his life.

The book of Job depicts the story of a just man who suffered an horrendously difficult life due to the malice of the evil one, and it reveals how God's perspective is so different from man's. Man sees the good of his life in terms of what he can gain in this world. God sees the purpose of man's life in terms of what he can achieve for glory in the next.

The Book of Job opens with a discussion in the heavenly court between God and the devil, regarding man's loyalty and goodness (Jb 1:6). The devil asserts that man loves God only in return for favors, and never in a purely selfless way, and challenges the claim that man can be good and love God freely. God allows the devil to test the just man, Job, bringing tremendous anguish and loss into his life.

Thus the Book of Job sets forth a scene of incredible tragedy and sadness, as Job is mysteriously and viciously subjected to one misfortune after another. The book then proceeds with discussions and reactions of those around him: his family, and friends. Many try to offer advice and explanation for what has happened. Many fall into judgments that are hurtful, if not utterly wrong. From the outside, it is difficult to truly help. Job himself struggles to understand the meaning of his life, questioning at one point why he was even born (Jb 3:1).

His wife is the one who utters the words for which the devil is preparing Job. She urges him to "*curse God and die*" (Jb 2:9). But Job refuses. He neither blames God, nor wishes to despair in suicide. "*In all this, Job did not sin or*

*charge God with wrong*” (Jb 1:22). Despite everything, there is something in Job greater and deeper than all the torment he suffered: a profound faith and knowledge of God, and an indestructible hope that persevered in trust, and looked to live.

The book of Job highlights the role of faith. Human problems and human suffering, including death, are not solved humanly. Physical and mental affliction always have a spiritual component; they are part of larger struggle between good and evil. The devil always has a hand in human suffering, adding an element of cruelty and torment.

In the end, we must come to God, humbly, recognizing that our lives serve a supernatural purpose understood only in the courts of heaven. Job speaks the famous words that confound the devil: “*Naked I came forth from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall depart. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord*” (Jn 1:21). This humble surrender and awe of God on the part of Job, stated at the beginning of the book, leads to his final act of faith which is the culmination of the book at the end (Jb 42).

The sufferings my brother Wayne experienced mirror those of Job. They broke his mind. They scarred his body from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. They created situations which at various times isolated and took him away from family and friends. They created seemingly impenetrable walls of misunderstanding. He was often physically ill. Like Job, Wayne found himself living in poverty, in dust and ashes (Jb 2:7).

But his soul and spirit were strong. Nothing destroyed *him*. A medal on his key-ring revealed the way in which he questioned his birth: “*The two most important days in your life are the day you were born, and the day you find out why.*” This is not the statement of someone defeated. In three things Wayne was not harmed:

Wayne’s *faith* remained clear and intact. He retained a profound belief and knowledge of God, and gave witness to his Catholic faith among people of all persuasions. He had Fear of the Lord, and saw everything in the context of faith.

Wayne’s *hope* never diminished but was in fact increased. It was hope, he told me, that caused his recovery, and enabled him to help others. The guiding principle of all that he did in ministering to others with mental illness was to encourage and give hope. It was this unconquerable virtue that caused everyone who knew him to love him and be instantly attracted to his joyful spirit.

And finally, Wayne never lost *charity*. He never descended into bitterness. He never cursed God. Instead, he lived with profound empathy and understanding

of others. His personal sufferings translated into a life of service and rich giving for others, though he himself had so little in terms of material possessions. From his life, blessings and healings multiplied.

One of my siblings commented, that the demons who afflicted him never left him, but this was by God's design. In the end it was they who had to be tormented by what he accomplished. God permits evil, to show the force of good.

What the Scriptures proclaim is true, and they are proved over again in human life. The lessons of Job, which are mirrored in the life of my brother Wayne, are echoed also in that other great book of the Bible, the Wisdom of Solomon:

*“The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if before men, indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality. Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself. Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect” (Wis 3:1-6,9).*

Wayne would always say to me, “I am your older brother, don't forget it.” It was he who first considered the priesthood in our family. It is he who goes now first to glory.

Rest in peace, my brother.