

Today we gather to pray for Tom Carelli ... beloved husband, father, uncle, grandfather ... friend. Our prayers are many things for him ... a way to honor him and his memory ... a consolation for our own grief at his passing ... but also a way of uniting with him spiritually ... and to accompany him on this final leg of his eternal journey ... to assist him through our prayers ... as he enters eternal life.

In the First Reading from St. Paul's letter to the Romans, we hear
*that just as Christ was raised from the dead ...
we too might live in newness of life.*

And St. Paul continues emphasizing our connection to Jesus Christ in life and in death reminding us that

*If, then, we have died with Christ,
we believe that we shall also live with him.*

With this, we have an understanding of the Faith which Tom held his entire life. Through good times, and bad ... no matter the doubt or question ... Tom's love for God and Jesus Christ ... grew and deepened.

And as we heard in the Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples ... and us:
You have faith in God; have faith also in me.

Faith is not understanding ... yet faith is not opposed to understanding ... but rather operates as a glue or a mortar ... holding together those things we do understand.

Death remains a mystery ... yet on the other hand, life - too - is a mystery. And somehow we find a way to persevere ... in faith ... in hope ... and in love. Love of God and love for each other.

In Baptism, as St. Paul says, we died with Christ ... We believe that the baptized receive an infusion of Faith, Hope, and Love. For those who believe, even in the face of the unknown ... or in the midst of a mystery ... there is strength in Jesus ... who is for us

the way and the truth and the life.

And so in this liturgy, we accompany Tom with our prayers ... and we honor his faith through our presence here today.

Following this Mass, this afternoon, we will reassemble at Great Lakes National Veteran's Administration Cemetery. And most likely we will hear the tune known as *Butterfield's Lullaby* ... more commonly called *Taps*. While the melody is familiar, perhaps we are unfamiliar with the words ... which I want to use to end this reflection:

*Day is done, gone the sun
From the lakes, from the hills, from the sky
All is well, safely rest
God is nigh.*

*Fading light dims the sight
And a star gems the sky, gleaming bright
From afar, drawing near
Falls the night.*

*Thanks and praise for our days
Neath the sun, neath the stars, neath the sky
As we go, this we know
God is nigh.*

Eternal rest grant unto Tom, O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon him.
May he rest in peace.
Amen.

May his soul,
and the souls of all the faithful departed
through the mercy of God rest in peace.
Amen.