

<sup>oral</sup>  
This is Dan Price for ~~Community Comment~~, I'm going to share my thoughts on ~~the~~  
~~Solidarity~~ of both Sadness—and Hope.

I have attended two funerals the past week, the first for the wife of a former ~~colleague~~<sup>associate</sup> who had lived well and long. The second for a colleague and friend in ministry, Father Eric Freed, whom I had the opportunity to work with on several occasions, most recently the Thanksgiving Sing held at ~~the~~ St. Bernard's Church. In light of recent events it is hard to forget that evening ~~just~~ less than two months ago, when Father Eric and his parish hosted about a dozen church choirs with such dignity and joy!

Funerals are normally sad, ~~but some sadder~~. As you might expect, there was a deep sense of sadness at the funeral of Father Eric due to the sudden and violent circumstances surrounding his death—and the love he had shown ~~to~~ many in our community. "Love suffers long." I think many were crying, and many more weeping underneath their stoic resolve. Perhaps some, like me, held tears back as best we could, because the emotional waters would have created a flood—should the ~~emotional~~ dam begin burst.

There is a powerful solidarity of sadness forged at most funerals because death aligns the emotions like nothing else—except perhaps for hope. Which leads to my next observation:

Overwhelming sadness was not the only emotion present at father Eric's funeral. There were also many bright candles of hope. Hope was kindled when about a thousand ~~(mostly)~~<sup>not all,</sup> Christians gathered in the church to remember Father Eric and his ministry. Hope was kindled when the Bishop ~~reminded us of~~<sup>mentioned</sup> Father Eric's baptism into Christ, reminding us that he died with Christ, and ~~also~~ waits to rise with him. Hope was kindled when the Scriptures were read. I was encouraged by the readings from Romans chapter eight, and Luke chapter twenty four; the Bishop preached from the latter passage, reminding us that therein ~~the~~ some of the disciples poured out their grief on the Emmaus Road, ironically, to a risen Jesus: the very man whose death they were grieving. The Lord asked them, what they were discussing. The first answer was not with words, but in their posture and countenance. Luke says, "They stood still, looking sad." Those disciples continued grieving because they were unable to recognize the risen Jesus. Grief will do that to you—a heavy heart can dull the senses, fog the mind and make you feel like standing still is heavy exercise. Their forlorn condition continued until they sat at the table and broke bread together. Then, Luke tells us, their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus. Suddenly, the ~~countenance~~<sup>gloom of death</sup> lifted.

Bishop Vasa summarized the message from Luke 24 with this alliteration: Remember, rejoice, return. The disciples remembered what the prophets had written and Jesus had <sup>himself</sup> taught, so they rejoiced, at having seen the risen Lord. And finally, they returned—to <sup>where Jesus had been killed</sup> Jerusalem. No longer fleeing in fear: they went back to the place ~~they had been fleeing~~ with uplifted hearts. So were our hearts lifted, last Monday at Father Eric's funeral—even under the veil of tears.

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