

SERMON

**FROM THE FUNERAL SERVICE/EULOGY
GIVEN BY BARBARA REED LARKIN (DAUGHTER)
MONDAY, JUNE 5, 2000
IN MEMORY OF ANN BARBARA TAMASY REED (MOTHER)
[October 9, 1912 -- June 2, 2000]**

Because we do not have a minister conducting this service, I had not intended to include a sermon. In fact, I wrote the eulogy without a sermon. However, I am not going to let you off that easily, and I am going to give a brief sermon.

Sometime between yesterday and today, a topic for a sermon had come to me. The function of a sermon is to tell a story using some sort of analogy to put an idea into a different perspective and give us something to think about.

The topic of my sermon today is "Funerals... Why they are a sad event and why we feel so uncomfortable when we attend them."

There are some cultures where a funeral is considered a celebration or a happy event. Obviously, this is from the perspective of the deceased and not from the perspective of the mourners. If I took a poll here today, I think I would find that more people are sad than happy. I could also safely assume that, given a choice, this would not be the preferred event for today. I am sure nobody here woke up this morning saying, "What a nice day today. I would really like to go to a funeral."

Some of us are here because we are related to the deceased. Some are here because they are a friend or acquaintance of the deceased. Some here may not have even known my mother, but are here because they are a friend of my brother Ken's or a friend of mine and may have even suffered a similar loss and wanted to come to offer their condolences and give whatever comfort they could to their friend. I know it really means a lot to my brother and me that you came and that we have such wonderful friends who care about us and are sad when we are sad.

Why are we uncomfortable at funerals? Certainly we know that physical death is a part of the life cycle. We read about people dying in the papers every day. We may be sad for awhile ("Oh, what a shame that so many people died in that car

accident") but soon the incident is forgotten and we do not give it another thought. After all, death is something that happens to somebody else.

Most of society is not comfortable about the subject of death. We do not like to think about it and we do not like to talk about it. It is not the subject of choice at social functions. We do not know what words to say to our friend who is grieving. We do not want to say the wrong thing or say something that will make the grieving person feel even sadder than he or she does already. What if we said something meant to comfort them and instead they start to cry? We would feel terrible. We do not want our friends to be sad or hurting inside. We do not understand that sometimes the person who is grieving for a loved one needs to talk about the person who has passed on, and share fond memories. Sometimes your friend just needs you to be there to listen. Sometimes all your friend needs from you is a hug. Sometimes just knowing you care is enough. You can never say the wrong thing if you say it from your heart and are sincere.

Why are we uncomfortable at funerals? I believe one reason is that when we attend a funeral of a loved one, we are forced to come to terms with our own mortality. This is especially true, the older we get, and the more we seem to be attending the funerals of our peers. Because we do not totally understand the process of death, we cannot imagine what it would be like and it is human nature to have a fear of the unknown.

In our culture, we put a great deal of emphasis on youth and physical appearance. We are terrified of the aging process. We spend millions of dollars on surgeries and products that promise us we can delay the aging process. We look in the mirror and lament every new gray hair and every new wrinkle. We think of ourselves as being only what we see reflected to us in the mirror. A physical body.

But, we are more than just a physical body. There are many parts that make us the person we are that are nonphysical. Our brain is physical, but our soul, our spirit, our mind, our emotions, and our thoughts are nonphysical. Both our physical parts and our nonphysical parts combine together to form our total being. A doctor could take an x-ray of our brain and could show us what our brain looked like. A doctor could not, however, show us what our mind looked like, or even where in the brain it could be found. A doctor could not point to the x-ray of our brain and say, "See that little spot right there? That is one of your thoughts." A thought is invisible because it is nonphysical. Yet, are not our thoughts very much a part of who we are?

Those of us who are here today are experiencing a feeling of loss and sadness because we will miss the physical presence of Ann Reed. But it will ease our sadness if we can look beyond the physical body and realize that our physical lives are only one manifestation of a soul's total expression and that each one of us has a nonphysical soul, mind, and thoughts as well as a physical body.

As a car is a vehicle that gets us from one place to another (and there are many other types of vehicles that can do this), the body is the soul's vehicle while we are here on earth. A car cannot take us anywhere without a driver to operate it. Yet, the driver is not the car; and the car is not the driver. A car will wear out; but the driver does not stay with it in the junkyard. The driver simply gets a different car to drive. Ann's soul was the driver of her body. Ann's vehicle contained some parts that wore out and her vehicle could no longer run without them. However, the real Ann, the driver, the soul, the spirit, essence, higher self, the "I AM" presence; whatever your name is for that super-consciousness, did not go anywhere. She is simply driving a nonphysical vehicle now, suitable for her new surroundings, but we cannot perceive it because we are still focused in a reality based upon the limitations imposed by physical time and space.

It is my belief that our consciousness can and does exist outside this physical reality which it allows us to perceive. The soul is indestructible - the soul is eternal - it has no beginning and no end... it simply "is". The soul is pure energy, and as such, it is constantly in motion, constantly changing form, leaving a magnetic field of energy as a memory of itself through each atom and molecule it passes. It leaves a part of itself, also, with us in what is called our memories. A part of Ann will always be alive in our memories of her. We feel sad, today, as we mourn her passing, but in time, fond memories will replace our tears.

Love and blessings to you all.