

HOMILY  
THE MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

KEVIN CHRISTOPHER AIDAN HEALEY

SAINT BERNADETTE CHURCH + WESTLAKE, OHIO  
28 APRIL 2009

FATHER THOMAS L. WEBER

THERE IS AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN LEGEND IN WHICH A WOMAN'S HAPPINESS IS SHATTERED BY THE LOSS OF HER BROTHER - A GOOD MAN, DEEPLY LOVED. TORN BY ANGUISH, SHE KEPT ASKING GOD "WHY?" BUT HEARING ONLY SILENCE SHE SET OUT IN SEARCH OF AN ANSWER.

SHE HAD NOT GONE FAR WHEN SHE CAME UPON AN OLD MAN SITTING ON A BENCH. HE WAS WEEPING. HE SAID: "I HAVE SUFFERED A GREAT LOSS. I AM A PAINTER AND I HAVE LOST MY EYESIGHT." HE, TOO, WAS SEEKING AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION "WHY?" THE WOMAN INVITED HIM TO JOIN HER. AND TAKING HIM BY THE ARM, THEY TRUDGED DOWN THE ROAD.

SOON THEY OVERTOOK A YOUNG MAN WHO WAS WALKING AIMLESSLY. HE HAD LOST HIS WIFE - THE SOURCE OF ALL HIS JOY - TO ANOTHER MAN. HE JOINED THEM IN THEIR SEARCH OF AN ANSWER TO "WHY?" SHORTLY THEY CAME UPON A YOUNG WOMAN WEEPING ON HER DOORSTEP. SHE HAD LOST HER CHILD. SHE TOO JOINED THEM. NOWHERE COULD THEY FIND AN ANSWER. SUDDENLY THEY CAME UPON JESUS.

EACH CONFRONTED JESUS WITH THEIR QUESTIONS. BUT JESUS GAVE NO ANSWER. INSTEAD JESUS BEGAN TO WEEP. AND HE SAID, "I AM BEARING THE BURDEN OF A WOMAN WHO HAS LOST HER BROTHER; A GIRL WHOSE BABY HAS DIED; A PAINTER WHO HAS LOST HIS EYESIGHT; AND A YOUNG MAN WHO HAS LOST A LOVE IN WHICH HE DELIGHTED."

AS JESUS SPOKE, THE FOUR MOVED CLOSER AND THEY EMBRACED EACH OTHER. AND THEN THEY GRASPED JESUS' HANDS. THEN JESUS SPOKE AGAIN SAYING: "MY DOMINION IS THE DOMINION OF THE HEART. (I CANNOT *PREVENT* PAIN, I CAN ONLY *HEAL* IT)." "HOW?" ASKED THE WOMAN. AND JESUS SAID: "I CAN ONLY HEAL IT BY *SHARING* IT." AND THEN JESUS WAS GONE. AND THE FOUR WERE LEFT STANDING THERE, *HOLDING EACH OTHER* !

ANN, TOM AND MARY KATE, AS YOU STAND AND HOLD ONE ANOTHER, ON THIS, THE MOST DIFFICULT DAY OF YOUR LIVES, PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE. PLEASE BE CERTAIN THAT THERE IS AN IMMENSE CIRCLE OF SUPPORT AROUND YOU. THAT CIRCLE BEGINS WITH KEVIN'S GRANDPARENTS, DOROTHY & TOM, JOAN & WARREN; HIS AUNTS AND UNCLES, PETER AND KATHY; SUSAN; JULIE AND MIKE; HIS BELOVED AND DEARLY DEVOTED GREAT-AUNT MIMI; HIS COUSINS, RACHEL AND MARTY, JOEY AND NATALIE. THE CIRCLE CONTINUES WITH THE COMMUNITY OF SAINT ANGELA PARISH AND SCHOOL AND ALL OF FAIRVIEW PARK; WITH THE COMMUNITY OF SAINT BERNADETTE PARISH AND SCHOOL AND ALL OF WESTLAKE, ROCKY RIVER, NORTH OLMSTED, BAY VILLAGE, AVON AND AVON LAKE; WITH THE ENTIRE DIOCESAN FAMILY REPRESENTED BY BISHOP RICHARD LENNON AND AUXILIARY BISHOP A. JAMES QUINN, WHOSE PRESENCE HERE TODAY DEEPLY HONORS THE HEALEY FAMILY AND FOR WHICH THEY ARE GRATEFUL BEYOND ANY WORDS; WITH THE COMMUNITY OF SAINT IGNATIUS HIGH SCHOOL AND ALL OF THE PARISHES AND COUNTIES OF NORTHEAST OHIO FROM WHICH ITS STUDENTRY COMES; WITH THE COMMUNITY OF SORIN COLLEGE LED BY FATHER JAMES KING AND FATHER MONK MALLOY AND ALL OF THE YOUNG MEN OF THAT HALLOWED AND LEGENDARY RESIDENCE HALL, THEN SPILLING OUT ONTO THE ENTIRE CAMPUS OF YOUR BELOVED UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME AND WELL BEYOND. YES, ANN, TOM AND MARY KATE WE ARE ALL HERE, STANDING WITH YOU AND AROUND YOU IN A TREMENDOUS CIRCLE OF LOVE, AFFECTION AND SUPPORT. AND WE *WILL* BE HERE FOR ALL THREE OF YOU; WE *ALL* WILL BE HERE FOR YOU, WHENEVER AND HOWEVER YOU NEED US. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT. PLEASE DO NOT EVER FORGET THAT.

I AM AWARE THAT SOME OF YOU MAY BE LOOKING TO THIS TIME OF REFLECTION ON THE

WORD OF GOD FOR SOME EXPLANATION, SOME INSIGHT, SOME ANSWER AS TO *WHY?* *WHY* DID KEVIN HAVE TO DIE? *WHY* DID HE HAVE TO DIE AT THE YOUNG AGE OF 20 YEARS AND ELEVEN DAYS? *WHY* DID HE HAVE TO CONTRACT SUCH A DREADED DISEASE IN ONE OF ITS MOST MYSTERIOUS AND INCURABLE FORMS? *WHY* DID HE HAVE TO SUFFER SO MUCH - MORE THAN WE WILL EVER REALLY KNOW - PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND EVEN SPIRITUALLY? *WHY* DID HIS BODY HAVE TO ENDURE SO HEROICALLY THE MANY BRUTAL AND LASTING SCARS, FROM HIS CHEST TO HIS ANKLES, FRONT AND REAR, THE EMBLEMS OF A TITANICALLY COURAGEOUS BATTLE? I WOULD SUBMIT TO YOU THAT NO ATHLETE IN THE STORIED HISTORIES OF SAINT IGNATIUS HIGH SCHOOL OR THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME EVER BORE MORE WOUNDS AND SCARS THAN THIS YOUNG *FIGHTING IRISHMAN*; AND HE DID IT WITH IMMEASURABLE DIGNITY, WITH UNSPEAKABLE COURAGE AND WITH UNBOUNDED CLASS AND GRACE. NO MY FRIENDS, WE DO NOT ASK “*WHY*” TODAY. AND WHY SHOULD WE? FOR THE LAST 847 DAYS OF HIS LIFE, KEVIN KNEW THAT HE SUFFERED WITH A POTENTIALLY FATAL DISEASE. AND NOT ONCE, NOT ONCE DID HE EVER ASK *WHY...WHY ME....WHY NOW...WHY THIS?* NEVER ONCE DID HE ASK THAT, AND WE WON’T START ASKING TODAY. ALL I CAN SUGGEST IS THAT WE MAKE THIS TIME OF REFLECTION ONE OF *REMEMBRANCE* AND *THANKSGIVING*. *REMEMBERING* ALL THAT KEVIN MEANT TO EACH OF US AND *THANKSGIVING* FOR THE TIME THAT HE WAS ABLE TO BE WITH US.

OUR SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS MORNING, CHOSEN SO WELL BY THE FAMILY, OFFER US WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND NOURISHMENT. SAINT PAUL USES THE IMAGERY OF AN ATHLETE IN PROCLAIMING THAT HE “HAS FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT; HE HAS RUN THE RACE; HE HAS FINISHED THE COURSE” AND THROUGH IT ALL HE HAS BEEN SUSTAINED BY THE GRACE OF GOD. IF PAUL WERE HERE TODAY, HE MIGHT HAVE SAID “I HAVE PLAYED LIKE A CHAMPION; I HAVE FOUGHT LIKE A CHAMPION; I HAVE PRAYED LIKE A CHAMPION; I HAVE TRUSTED LIKE A CHAMPION; I HAVE FINISHED LIKE A CHAMPION; AND TODAY, I CELEBRATE AND REJOICE LIKE A CHAMPION!”

OUR GOSPEL IS TAKEN FROM THE BEAUTIFUL *BREAD OF LIFE DISCOURSE* IN JOHN’S GOSPEL. THE BREAD OF LIFE MEANT EVERYTHING TO KEVIN HEALEY. HE LOVED THE MASS, THE EUCHARIST, IN A WAY UNCOMMON FOR A YOUNG MAN HIS AGE. DAILY MASS IN

THE SAINT IGNATIUS CHAPEL; DAILY MASS IN SORIN HALL OR THE BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART; IT WAS SO IMPORTANT TO HIM, IT WAS SO PRECIOUS TO HIM. HE KNEW IT *SUSTAINED* HIM, *SUPPORTED* HIM ON HIS JOURNEY; HIS OFTEN EXHILARATING, OFTEN TERRIFYING JOURNEY OF FAITH. THE ISRAELITES WANDERED FOR FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS. MANNA, BREAD FROM HEAVEN, WAS THEIR DAILY BREAD. THE OLD TESTAMENT DESCRIBES MANNA AS ONE OF THE GREATEST SIGNS THAT GOD ACCOMPLISHED. PSALM 78 TELLS US “GOD RAINED DOWN MANNA UPON THEM TO EAT AND GAVE THEM FOOD FROM HEAVEN. SO MORTALS ATE THE BREAD OF ANGELS.” THE MANNA STOPPED WHEN JOSHUA LED THE ISRAELITES INTO THE PROMISED LAND, BUT THE MEMORY OF MANNA, GOD’S BREAD OF LIFE, WAS KEPT ALIVE. WHEN THE ISRAELITES LOOKED TO THE FUTURE AND THE MESSIANIC AGE, THEY HOPED AND TRUSTED THAT MANNA WOULD AGAIN DESCEND FROM HEAVEN AND PEOPLE WOULD EAT IT. THE CROWDS IN OUR GOSPEL TODAY LOOK FOR A SIGN THAT MIGHT GIVE THEM HOPE THAT JESUS IS EQUAL TO MOSES’ GIFT OF MANNA. “WHAT SIGN CAN YOU DO THAT WE MAY SEE AND BELIEVE IN YOU?” THE CROWD REACHES OUT FOR MORE BREAD. BUT THE BREAD JESUS OFFERS IS NOT SOME *THING*, IT IS SOME *ONE*. “I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE,” JESUS SAYS. WHEN THE ISRAELITES WERE WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS, THE BREAD GOD PROVIDED WAS NOT MERELY PHYSICAL BREAD, MANNA. IT WAS ALSO A GIFT TO NOURISH THEIR FAITH AND HOPE. NOW THAT HOPE HAS BEEN MET IN JESUS. IN HIM, THE LONGED-FOR MANNA RETURNS. HE IS THE BREAD OF LIFE. WHEN WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK THAT SOME *THING* WILL MEET OUR HOPES AND GIVE US LIFE, WE ARE REMINDED THAT HOPE AND LIFE COME FROM SOME *ONE*: JESUS CHRIST, THE BREAD OF LIFE.

KEVIN HEALEY WAS THE FIRST-BORN SON OF PROFESSIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATORS. HE HAD ASPIRED TO STUDY THE LAW ONE DAY, AT HARVARD, AND EARN THE DEGREE *JURIS DOCTOR*. I AM PERSONALLY CONVINCED, AND I KNOW I AM NOT ALONE, THAT HE WOULD EVENTUALLY ANSWER GOD’S CALL TO SERVE AS A CATHOLIC PRIEST. MY ONLY UNCERTAINTY WAS WHETHER IT WOULD BE AS THE SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS OR THE SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS. BUT ALL OF THAT IS A MOOT POINT NOW, BECAUSE IT IS VERY CLEAR THAT ALL ALONG, GOD

HAD CALLED HIM, LIKE BOTH HIS PARENTS, TO THE NOBLE VOCATION OF *TEACHER*. AND WAS HE NOT A GREAT TEACHER? DID HE NOT SHOW ALL OF US THE WAY?

KEVIN HEALEY TAUGHT US ALL, BY THE WAY HE LIVED HIS LIFE, THAT HOPE IS STRONGER THAN DESPAIR; THAT COMPASSION IS STRONGER THAN INDIFFERENCE; THAT GENEROSITY IS STRONGER THAN GREED; THAT A SMILE IS STRONGER THAN A FROWN; THAT LAUGHTER IS STRONGER THAN SELF-PITY; THAT PERSEVERING IS STRONGER THAN QUITTING; THAT LOVE IS STRONGER THAN APATHY; THAT FORGIVENESS IS STRONGER THAN REVENGE; THAT FAITH IS STRONGER THAN DOUBT; THAT COURAGE IS STRONGER THAN FEAR; THAT AN INSATIABLE THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH IS STRONGER THAN LAZY IGNORANCE; AND YES, THAT LIFE, THE PRECIOUS, SACRED GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE, IS STRONGER THAN DEATH ITSELF. WASN'T KEVIN HEALEY A GREAT TEACHER. DIDN'T HE SHOW ALL OF US THE WAY?

HE TAUGHT US THAT THE PRACTICE OF YOUR FAITH, THE DAILY EXERCISE OF PRAYER AND DEVOTION IS NOTHING OF WHICH TO BE ASHAMED, NOT EVEN AS A TEEN-AGER. AS LONG AS I LIVE, I WILL NEVER FORGET THE EXPERIENCE OF PRAYING THE *CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY* WITH HIM DURING HOLY WEEK. HOW GRATEFUL HE WAS LAST SUMMER TO HAVE SOMEHOW GATHERED THE STRENGTH IT TOOK TO TRAVEL TO LOURDES AND CELEBRATE WITH KINDRED PILGRIMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD THE 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AND FINAL APPARITION OF MARY TO LITTLE BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS ON JULY 16<sup>TH</sup>. HOW DEEPLY DEVOTED HE WAS TO OUR LADY, TO NOTRE DAME, WHETHER UNDER HER TITLE OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES OR OUR LADY OF MT CARMEL. HOW DEARLY HE LOVED THAT GROTTA - IN FRANCE AND AT NOTRE DAME. YOUR NEIGHBORS CAROL AND PAT HANLON SPENT ALL DAY YESTERDAY CREATING A GROTTA AROUND THE STATUES OF MARY AND BERNADETTE HERE IN OUR SANCTUARY. THEY DID IT FOR KEVIN AND FOR YOU, HIS FAMILY. THAT ROSARY WE SAW IN HIS HANDS AT CHAMBERS FUNERAL HOME WAS NOT FOR PIOUS SHOW. HE RECEIVED IT IN LOURDES JUST LAST SUMMER AND IT IS WELL-WORN ALREADY!

HOW PROVIDENTIALY FITTING IT IS THAT KEVIN BE BURIED FROM A CHURCH DEDICATED TO THE PATRONAGE OF LITTLE BERNADETTE. YOU KNOW, JUST TWO NIGHTS BEFORE HE

DIED HE SPENT A LONG, FITFUL, RESTLESS NIGHT SPEAKING *IN FRENCH* TO HIS GOOD FRIEND, ST BERNADETTE. (THE AMAZING THING HERE IS THAT *KEVIN NEVER FORMALLY STUDIED FRENCH IN HIS LIFE!* LATIN, GREEK AND IRISH GAELIC, YES; BUT NEVER *FRENCH*). I NEVER KNEW UNTIL THE DAY AFTER HE DIED THAT KEVIN HAD A LITTLE APPREHENSION ABOUT VISITING THIS PROPERTY - THE SITE OF SOME PRETTY TOUGH DEFEATS DURING HIS STUDENT-ATHLETE DAYS AT ST ANGELA. I BELIEVE IT IS DELICIOUSLY IRONIC AND SUPREMELY APPROPRIATE THAT KEVIN COME HERE TODAY TO CELEBRATE, WITH HIS NEAREST AND DEAREST 2,000 FRIENDS, THE GREATEST *VICTORY*, THE GREATEST *TRIUMPH* OF HIS LIFE! “O DEATH WHERE IS THY VICTORY? O DEATH WHERE IS THY STING?” KEVIN HEALEY COMES TO ST BERNADETTE, STARES DEATH AND DEFEAT SQUARELY IN THE FACE....AND HE LAUGHS! WITH THE RISEN LORD, HE IS THE *WINNER*, HE IS THE *VICTOR* TODAY!

EARLY ON AT LOURDES, BEFORE BERNADETTE EVEN KNEW WHO *THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN WHITE* WAS, MARY TOLD HER: “I DO NOT PROMISE YOU HAPPINESS IN THIS LIFE...BUT IN THE NEXT.” KEVIN NOW KNOWS, ALONG WITH HIS GOOD LITTLE FRIEND BERNADETTE, THE DEEPER, MYSTICAL MEANING OF THOSE WORDS.

READ THE NOTES IN YOUR PROGRAMS TAKEN FROM THE JOURNAL KEVIN KEPT THESE LAST FEW WEEKS. IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I WOULD HAVE GUESSED THEY WERE WRITTEN BY THERESE OF LISEUX. ALONG WITH JOHN OF THE CROSS, TERESA OF AVILA, MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, CATHERINE OF SIENA; AND MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA AND FAUSTINA KOWALSKA OF OUR OWN TIMES, KEVIN HEALEY EXPERIENCED THE *DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL*; HE KNEW DRYNESS AND DOUBT SPIRITUALLY. AND HE PERSEVERED! HE PERSEVERED THROUGH IT ALL!

WASN'T HE A GREAT TEACHER; DIDN'T HE TEACH US ALL THE WAY?

I AM SURE THAT MANY OF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH SCHUBERT'S *EIGHTH SYMPHONY*, SOME TIMES CALLED “THE UNFINISHED” SYMPHONY. BECAUSE IT IS SHORTER IN LENGTH, BECAUSE IT DOES NOT POSSESS ALL OF THE QUALITIES AND MOVEMENTS OF STANDARD SYMPHONIES, MUSICOLOGISTS HAVE ALWAYS CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS SIMPLY AN UNFINISHED SYMPHONY. BUT MORE RECENTLY, A HANDFUL OF SCHOLARS HAVE OFFERED ANOTHER OPINION. THEY CONTEND THAT ALTHOUGH IT *APPEARS* TO BE UNFINISHED,

THAT ALTHOUGH IT *SEEMS* TO BE INCOMPLETE, IT IS THEIR THESIS THAT IT WAS A FULL, COMPLETE, FINISHED SYMPHONY. THERE MAY BE SOME OF US WHO LOOK AT THE LIFE OF KEVIN HEALEY, WITH ALL OF ITS TALENT, ALL OF ITS POTENTIAL, ALL OF ITS PROMISE; AND SAY, WITH A LOUD SIGH: “WHAT A TRAGEDY, WHAT A WASTE, WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT.” AND TO THAT NOTION, I WOULD SAY VERY RESPECTFULLY, “O, NO. YOU ARE MISTAKEN. KEVIN HEALEY LIVED A VERY *FULL* LIFE; A VERY *COMPLETE* LIFE; A VERY *FINISHED* LIFE. HE DID EXACTLY WITH HIS LIFE, NO MORE AND NO LESS, THAN HIS HEAVENLY FATHER INTENDED HIM TO DO. AND HE DID IT VERY WELL; HE DID IT EXTRAORDINARILY WELL. IN FACT, I WOULD PROPOSE TO YOU THAT IN 20 YEARS AND 11 DAYS, KEVIN HEALEY ACCOMPLISHED MORE THAN SOME OTHERS ACHIEVE IN 2, 3 OR 4 TIMES AS MANY YEARS AS KEVIN LIVED. O, NO. HIS LIFE WAS VERY FULL AND COMPLETE; LET’S NOT MAKE ANY MISTAKE ABOUT THAT. HIS LIFE WAS A “FINISHED SYMPHONY.”

IF I MAY BE PERMITTED TO SAY A FEW WORDS TO ANN, TOM AND MARY KATE. ON BEHALF OF EVERYONE HERE TODAY, AND COUNTLESS OTHERS WHO CANNOT BE HERE, THANK YOU! SIMPLY THANK YOU! CERTAINLY ON BEHALF OF THE 722,016 PEOPLE WHO HAVE VISITED KEVIN’S WEBSITE, (AND I KNOW YOU WILL BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL TO JON JARC FOR MAKING THAT POSSIBLE), THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR FAITH, YOUR TRUST, YOUR BELIEF, YOUR CONFIDENCE THAT JESUS WOULD TAKE CARE OF YOUR PRECIOUS KEVIN.

ANN, YOU REMINDED ME THE OTHER DAY OF SOMETHING I HAD FORGOTTEN. ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 13, 1989 I WENT TO SEE YOU AT MARYMOUNT HOSPITAL AND TO MEET FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME YOUR NEW-BORN SON. YOU AND TOM CALLED HIM KEVIN, A GAELIC NAME MEANING “BEAUTIFUL AT BIRTH.” AND HE WAS BEAUTIFUL THAT NIGHT AND SO WERE YOU; AND HE ONLY GOT MORE BEAUTIFUL AS TIME WENT ON. YOU INVITED ME TO COME TO THE CHURCH OF THE GESU, WHERE I WAS ORDAINED, TO BAPTIZE HIM AND YOU GAVE HIM THE ADDITIONAL NAME OF “CHRISTOPHER,” GREEK AND LATIN FOR THE “ONE WHO BEARS CHRIST.” AND WHAT A JOB KEVIN DID IN CARRYING CHRIST TO OTHERS IN THE 7,316 DAYS HE SPENT IN THIS LIFE. AND IN HIS FINAL 845 DAYS, HE WHO BORE CHRIST TO OTHERS THEN BORE THE WOUNDS AND SCARS OF CHRIST ON HIS LEGS, ON HIS CHEST, ON HIS SHOULDERS AND ON HIS BACK. HE WAS A “CHRISTOPHER” INDEED.

BISHOP QUINN ANOINTED HIM ON THE DAY OF HIS CONFIRMATION WITH THE GAELIC NAME "AIDEN" WHICH MEANS "A LITTLE FIRE." IT MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE FIRE IN THE 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, BUT IT GREW INTO A MIGHTY BLAZE, FOR JESUS AND FOR MARY. HIS HEART WAS ON FIRE FOR THE FAITH. BISHOP LENNON HAS RIGHTFULLY MADE EVANGELIZATION A VERY HIGH PRIORITY FOR EVERY PARISH IN THE DIOCESE. I THINK KEVIN MAY VERY WELL IMITATE THERESE OF LISIEUX (THE NAME MARY KATE CHOSE WHEN BISHOP LENNON CONFIRMED HER JUST A MONTH AGO AT ST ANGELA'S) WHO ALSO DIED AT A VERY YOUNG AGE AND DECLARED THAT "SHE WOULD SPEND HER HEAVEN DOING GOOD THINGS ON EARTH." I KNOW AT SAINT BERNADETTE PARISH, KEVIN HEALEY, THROUGH HIS INTERCESSORY PRAYER, WILL BE REGARDED AS OUR "EVANGELIZER-IN-CHIEF" AND IT WILL ALL GO WELL!

ANN AND TOM, WE ALL STAND IN AWE AT YOUR ACHIEVEMENT. WITH THE AWESOME GRACE OF GOD, YOU ACCEPTED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RECEIVING THIS PRECIOUS, SACRED GIFT FROM GOD; WITH HARD WORK, DEVOTION, GUIDANCE, A LOT OF PRAYER, A LITTLE GOOD LUCK, AND TONS OF FAITH - YOU RAISED UP THE MOST CHRIST-LIKE YOUNG MAN WE COULD EVER HOPE TO MEET!

AND MARY KATE. EVERY PERSON IN THIS CHURCH TODAY EXTENDS THEIR HEARTS TO YOU. WE ALL KNOW THAT KEVIN WAS YOUR MENTOR, YOUR PROTECTOR, YOUR GUIDE, YOUR INSPIRATION, YOUR VERY BEST FRIEND. KEVIN WAS YOUR HERO!

BUT MOST OF ALL, MOST OF ALL, HE WAS YOUR *BROTHER*. AND YOU WILL MISS HIM, MISS HIM TERRIBLY. BUT PLEASE REMEMBER, MARY KATE, HE WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU, VERY MUCH ALIVE IN YOUR HEART AND IN YOUR MEMORY. HE WILL BE WITH YOU ON THAT *LITTLE-BIT SCARY DAY* YOU BEGIN YOUR STUDIES AT SAINT JOSEPH ACADEMY. HE WILL BE WITH YOU WHEN YOU CARRY YOUR FLAG AND MARCH NEXT FALL WITH THE SAINT IGNATIUS HIGH SCHOOL BAND WHERE HE SO PROUDLY PLAYED HIS BELOVED SAXAPHONE FOR FOUR YEARS. YES, HE WILL BE WITH YOU, AND HE WILL GUIDE YOU AND HELP YOU FOR ALL OF YOUR DAYS.

THEY SAY THAT YOU CAN TELL A LOT ABOUT A PERSON BY THE KIND OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM HE HANGS AROUND. THE UNCOUNTED NUMBER OF PEOPLE HERE TODAY IS JUST A FRACTION OF THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD WHO CAME TO KNOW AND LOVE YOUR SON AND BROTHER. I WOULD LIKE EVERYONE HERE TO LET YOU KNOW, JUST ONE MORE TIME, IN A RESPECTFUL AND YET THUNDEROUS WAY, WHAT WE ALL THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR DEAR KEVIN. ANN, TOM AND MARY KATE, PLEASE STAND UP AND TURN AROUND AND SEE THE KIND OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM KEVIN HUNG AROUND. AND WILL ALL OF YOU GOOD PEOPLE PLEASE NOW LET THEM KNOW HOW YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THEIR DEAR SON AND BROTHER? (A THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE CONCLUDING IN A STANDING OVATION OF SEVERAL MINUTES FOLLOWED).

MOST ALL OF US KNOW HOW MUCH KEVIN ENJOYED MUSICAL PLAYS. I WILL NEVER FORGET HIS PORTRAYAL OF THE RABBI IN *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF* ON THE STAGE OF MAGNIFICAT HIGH SCHOOL A FEW YEARS AGO. IN YOUR PROGRAMS THERE IS A REFERENCE TO THE BROADWAY SONG *YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE* FROM *CAROUSEL*. IT IS THE ANTHEM OF A CELTIC SOCCER TEAM WHICH KEVIN LOVED. THERE IS A VERY POPULAR SHOW ON BROADWAY NOW CALLED *WICKED*, THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE TWO WITCHES FROM *THE WIZARD OF OZ*. IT TURNS OUT THAT THE GOOD WITCH AND THE WICKED WITCH CAME TO A RECONCILIATION AFTER YEARS OF HOSTILITY. TOGETHER THEY SING: "I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT PEOPLE COME INTO OUR LIVES FOR A REASON, BRINGING SOMETHING WE MUST LEARN///AND WE ARE LED TO THOSE WHO HELP US MOST TO GROW IF WE LET THEM///AND WE HELP THEM IN RETURN. NOW I DON'T KNOW IF I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS TRUE, BUT I KNOW I'M WHO I AM TODAY BECAUSE I KNEW YOU....BECAUSE I KNEW YOU, I HAVE BEEN CHANGED.....FOR GOOD." I SUBMIT TO YOU TODAY THAT ANYONE WHO KNEW KEVIN HEALEY, FROM SAINT ANGELA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL; TO SAINT IGNATIUS HIGH SCHOOL; TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME; TO THE 722,016 VISITORS TO HIS WEBSITE; TO ANYONE WHO KNEW KEVIN HEALEY, THEY HAVE BEEN CHANGED, *CHANGED FOR THE GOOD*, AND *CHANGED FOR GOOD*, THAT IS TO SAY, *CHANGED FOREVER!*

MAY KEVIN CHRISTOPHER AIDAN HEALEY; AND HIS DEAR GRANDMOTHER GEIGER(WHOM HE NEVER MET IN THIS LIFE AND BESIDE WHOM HE WILL BE BURIED TODAY); AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE HIM; MAY THEY ALL NOW, THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD, REST IN PEACE. AMEN!

-- FATHER THOMAS L. WEBER