

“All Done.” The Homily on the Occasion of George Hoyer’s Funeral

Colleagues,

Last week Thursday (May 5) Marie and I were in Worcester, Massachusetts for the funeral liturgy of her brother George Hoyer. His two sons, pastors Peter and Christopher, conducted the liturgy as celebrant and homilist, respectively. For a number of you on this listserv George was teacher and/or colleague. I have Chris’s permission to pass his proclamation on to you.

Peace and Joy!

Ed Schroeder

“All Done.”

The Homily on the Occasion of George Hoyer’s Funeral

5. May 2011 + Trinity Lutheran Church, Worcester

The Lord is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed! Alleluia!

George William, baptized child of God,
walked the last leg of the journey to unbounded joy
gamely, confidently, faith-fully . . .
yet, by his reckoning in any event,
entirely too slowly.

Now that walk is ended

and for this gift, with him, we give God heart-felt thanks

today.

Isaiah [46:4, the first reading in the liturgy] has it right:
God made him.

God carried him. (Even to his old age.)

God saved him.

You, too, have carried him, lo these many years.

This gracious pastor [Susan Nachtigal] and her gentle spouse.

And you – this loving assembly called Trinity –

this confederation of clergy-types of Central Massachusetts –
by your caring, your hospitality, your good company.

You, too, have carried him,

and for this, our family, gives God heart-felt thanks today.

Yet this day felt like a long time coming.

Some Tuesday noon – last week? – the week before that? –

George whispered to me,

“I guess I just want it to be done now.”

That, surely, was part of the mind of Christ,
in those late, agonizing hours of Good Friday.

“How long, O Lord, how long?” “My God, my God.” “I guess I just
want it to
be done now.”

But now the One who called George to this life
has allowed him, with his Lord, to whisper at last, “it is
finished.”

Which is more than a metaphor . . .

Which is the holy truth of the catholic faith . . .

The hope of those who live . . .

The joy of those who die in the Lord . . .

since our Lord Christ’s assumption of the punishment

for the failings of our fathers and the sins of the sons –

His willing embrace of the death that was rightfully our own.

Our Lord Jesus' words, "It is finished,"
announces, with a loud voice, the beginning of life beyond our
imagining
(let alone our deserving)
into which George entered in his baptism
and has now entered more completely still
and which beckons humankind, every day and everywhere and
always.

Years ago, in a barn-like parsonage in Nowhere, New Jersey,
Peter's first child, George's first granddaughter,
a toddler still,
cried uncontrollably for no apparent reason,
until, as I recall, (or at least as I long to remember it)
her grand-père took her into his arms . . .
at which point she sighed deeply,
and ended that crying jag with a whispered, "All done."

This is the holy truth of the crucifixion restated.
What needed doing for God's servant George . . .
What needed doing for us all . . .
was completed in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus
Christ.
When he uttered those sacred words, "It is finished,"
He meant: "All done."

Simeon saw it. "Lord, now you let your servant go in peace."
Thomas touched it. "My Lord and my God!"
George was blessed to proclaim it: point, problem, power.
"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news."

These last months have been filled with hours and hours of
sleep.
An active person in every respect (pastor, professor, author,
father, avid

read of detective fiction)

George began to find all that sleeping somewhat troublesome.

At one point, Susan reported, George furrowed his brow and inquired,

“Do I have a right to sleep this long?”

I should say . . . I should say . . .

A God-given, in Christ Jesus, right to sleep “in heavenly peace”

. . .

“free from sorrow, free from sin” . . . “safe and secure” . . .

until that great and promised overlapping of heaven and earth

in which our God will make all things new . . .

that “great, gettin’-up day” in which there will be no more sorrow, no more

dying, no more tears.

“Do I have the right to sleep this long?”

I should say . . .

In Christ. All done.