

HOMILY FOR THE FUNERAL MASS OF JUDE P. DOUGHERTY 15 MARCH 2021

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We have read the passage from St. John's gospel, chapter 11, in which Jesus speaks to Martha, just before he restores life to Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary. In St. Luke's gospel, in chapter 7, Christ restores life to the son of a widow from the village of Naim. In each of the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, we read that Jesus raised the daughter of the synagogue leader named Jairus. These were the three incidents in the gospels in which Jesus restored life to people, and they involved a mother and a father, a son and a daughter, and brothers and sisters. Christ did not bring life just to individuals, but to individuals in a family, with their family relationships and even the wider relationships of friends, the people who came to comfort Martha and Mary, the large crowd that accompanied the widow, the people in the house of Jairus.

This is how human death is experienced. It is not just an individual who dies, but a mother or a father, a son or daughter, a brother or a sister, and those who are left behind also suffer the death with the one who died. When Christ brings life out of death, he does so not only for the one who had died, but for those to whom he restores that person. This is how human death is experienced, and this is how Christ himself, and our Christian faith, deal with it. This is what we do now, as we mourn the death of Jude Dougherty.

We pray for him, but we also pray for the members of his family. We call to mind that his beloved wife, Patricia, died on December 8, almost exactly three months before Jude, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Jude and Patricia's family was the model for the families of their four sons and daughters-in-law: for Tom and Lynne, Michael and Angela, John and Michelle, and Paul and Elizabeth. Jude and Pat were greatly blessed in their children and in their ten grandchildren, Catherine, Grace, William, and Madeline; Patrick, Emma, and Jacob; Jack; and Alexander and Michael. I would also want to mention three people who helped Patricia Dougherty for years during her illness, and who then also served Jude in the final months of his life, with the greatest dedication and with Christian charity, Norma Ramirez, Mercedes Oballe, and Mirna Mechola.

Jude and his family were closely linked to another community, the Catholic University of America, and specifically the School of Philosophy. He joined the faculty in the School of Philosophy in 1966. He had done his graduate studies in the School, and before coming to Catholic University he was on the faculty at Bellarmine College in Louisville, Kentucky. His work in the University and the School was not just a job, it was a vocation. One year after his arrival, when Msgr. John K. Ryan retired as Dean of the School in 1967, Jude was elected by the faculty and then appointed by the rector as the new Dean, the first dean in the history of the School who was a layman. The late sixties were a time of great turmoil in the Church and in the United States, and Catholic University itself was caught up in controversy. Jude accepted the responsibility of becoming dean. He was the man for the place and for the time.

He built on the strengths that the School already possessed, and guided it, during those difficult times and afterward, for three decades, with extraordinary vision and energy. He accomplished things, not by just doing them himself, but by enabling the School, the faculty and students, to accomplish them, as a community in a common achievement, where each person would do what they were best at. This was leadership and authority in the best sense of the words.

For example, Jude took over a book series that had been started by his predecessor, Msgr. Ryan, *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, and expanded it, and under his editorship some sixty volumes appeared. He took over as editor of the *Review of Metaphysics* in 1971 and served for 44 years in that role. In both these roles he enabled countless authors to present their work. He inaugurated a weekly lecture series in the School, which brought in speakers from around the country and from other parts of the world. Each of these series dealt with a particular philosophical topic, and many of them became published as collections of essays. He invited guest professors to give courses in the School's program. In one semester, a teacher from a university in North America would come to the University once a week for a semester to give a course; many prominent figures gave such courses. In the other semester, Jude would bring a noted teacher from abroad to be a guest professor. All these efforts enabled the School to have contacts with centers of philosophy throughout the world, and enabled our own teachers and students to think in these wider contexts. In speaking about these contacts, we must not overlook the personal friendship that Jude developed with Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, then the Cardinal-Archbishop of Cracow, whom he invited to lecture at Catholic University when the Cardinal visited Washington, D.C. in 1976, and whom he met again on occasions in Rome during his reign as Pope John Paul II.

Of course, the most important thing in an academic community is to build up its own faculty and student body, both on the graduate and undergraduate level. Here again, Jude's contacts and friendships made faculty recruitment more successful, and excellent students were attracted to the program. Many academics who knew the program would comment on its unusual character, the sense of friendship and cooperation that prevailed among faculty and students. This was due to the members of the community themselves, but also in no small part to the example given by Jude Dougherty as its dean. One of the ways Jude did this was by having the School's visiting speakers stay at his home, and having them and members of the faculty and graduate students for dinner after the lecture, with Jude and Patricia presiding. In those years the famous Dougherty "dinner table" was the site of some of the best philosophical and cultural conversations in the Washington area.

At the core of an academic program is the material that is taught, and in this respect Jude and his faculty colleagues agreed on maintaining the prominence of Thomistic philosophy, with solid representation of the best of Franciscan thought, in Scotus and Bonaventure, as well as the work of St. Augustine, along with the serious representation of classical and Hellenistic Greek thought, Muslim philosophy, and modern and contemporary thinking. The School owes its basic allegiance to the Catholic tradition of philosophy, but also strives to represent the major thinkers in the

history of philosophy. This is the substance of philosophy, the best that it has achieved, and it has been brought to life in the School. As part of The Catholic University of America, the faculty and students of the School also recognize that human reason is perfected by Christian faith, that our understanding is enlarged when it receives, from the words of God himself, and from the Incarnate Son of God, what it means to exist, what it means to live, and even what it means to die.

Human life can be brilliant and magnificent, but the words of the Benedictus remind us that even at its brightest, human life is lived “in the shadow of death.” The darkness of human death, the shadow it casts over human life, is the place where God’s love is most clearly shown to us, in the death of Christ and in our own death. God’s power and love can conquer even this. God’s power needed to reach this extreme in order to redeem us. The resurrection of Jesus shows us that death does not silence the final word. His resurrection shows what the words he spoke about life truly mean. And the words and actions of Christ were not just those of a prophet or a saint; they were the words and deeds of God himself, God incarnate, speaking to us and acting toward us as a human being in his own voice, the Son of God and the Word of God. With Martha we reply, “Yes, Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.”

Jude Dougherty has entered into the Paschal Mystery of death and redemption. His life is completed, we can see it as a whole. We should remember to pray for Jude, because, to use words taken from Evelyn Waugh, even though we admire a person’s life, there remains a great difference between even the best of human beings, and the blinding, ineffable goodness of God, and we need his mercy and grace to come into his presence.

We think of the funeral liturgy as something the Church does for the person who was deceased. But the liturgy also does something else. It allows the person who has died to speak to us publicly for one last time. Every time someone we know dies, it is a reminder to all of us who remain behind of our own mortality. We must realize that life is short, and in the end the only thing that matters is not how others see us here, but how God sees us, and how we have faced the solemn responsibilities of life. Each of us today ought to think about our own time to die, because we too will face Almighty God with the life that we lived here. What sort of life will we give back to him? May it be a life lived in faith, hope, and charity, in fulfillment of our obligations to God, to his Church, to our country, and to one another. May God help us to live according to his will and for his glory, so that we will be prepared to meet him. We make this prayer through him who is the Resurrection and the Life, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.