

Prayer

Celebrating the Life of Norman Campbell

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Oh God,
we would be still and know that You are God,
Source of all being,
Mysterious Mover of the ongoing cosmic drama,
creatively breathing fresh surprises into the tapestry of our history,
graciously present to us in those moments of awareness
when we come to ourselves,
when for at least a brief time light dawns upon us
and we are saturated with wonder –
at the sight of setting sun or starry sky,
or our Great Lake blanketed with snow on towering bergs of ice.

Then in silence and solitude
we know what is beyond knowing.
Then a serenity sweeps over our souls
and we know all is gift.
For we did not create ourselves or our world –
not the brilliant winter sun or blinding blizzard,
not the air we breathe,
not the winter landscape wrapped in glistening ermine.

Then we know we are part of something so much larger
than the narrow parameters of our daily experience and limited understanding.
Before the wonder of it all,
we sense we are embraced,
caught up in something the dimensions of which we cannot begin to take in –
that Mystery that has addressed us,
eliciting from us in turn the response of address,
when from our depths we utter, “O God.”

Then, knowing beyond knowing,
we know we have been found by our Source
and in turn have found our Resting Place.

Source and Resting Place,
present to us in mysterious and gracious Presence.
It is enough.
Only gratitude then fills our being and thus we pray,
“Thanks be to You, O God.”

Gathered here as we are in the posture of worship in Your Presence,
we have come to celebrate the life of this good man, Norman Campbell.

We remember the way he was
and we know why we are grieving so deeply.
He leaves such a crater in our hearts
for he filled us so tenderly with his mere presence –
gentle, kind, gracious, humble, unassuming, generous –
the adjectives surface so spontaneously.
This one we have loved and lost awhile
was a very special human being
and he graced our lives so richly.

A lover, a care giver,
an irreplaceable presence.
Beyond the circle of family and friends,
a brilliant engineer, a keen industrialist and business man –
one who created of his workers a family.
Yet in this gentle giant a fire burned –
for Tigers, and Blue was a sacred color
in the liturgy of his life.

And, O God,
he walked always in Your Light,
a man of deep trust, of inquiring mind,
one who rested deeply in Your grace.
Those of us beyond family saw all of this
but knew as well that his family was where his heart dwelt,
where his love was poured,
where he found his deepest joy.

We celebrate this one, dearly loved and deeply respected.
We remember and we give You thanks,
O good and gracious God,
for the gift we shared– family, dear friends, larger community –
the gift we shared of his presence in our midst.

Loss is proportionate to love;
pain is measured by what the one removed meant to us –
and this one meant so much.
Yet, amazingly, O God,

these are bitter-sweet moments.
There is no denying the loss,
but there is no denying the wonder as well –
the wonder at the beauty of love,
the meaning of life,
the sacredness of human bonding.

Things come into focus;
we gain perspective.
We know in tangible experience what we thought we knew before,
but realize we didn't know as deeply –
that what matters finally is the love we've known,
the love we've given,
the love we've received.

Our hearts swell, eyes moisten as we contemplate it all –
the gift we've known in this one
who loved so deeply, so broadly, so naturally...

Knowing he was resting on everlasting arms
in the embrace of Grace,
he saw his end,
and in confidence he chose to enter Your presence, O God,
resting in his final labored breathing
in the abyss of Your love.

And in such a time as this,
in such a place as this,
Gracious God,
we are grateful above all
that the end is not broken health and dreams unfulfilled,
swallowed up in death,
but rather the confidence that
to live is to live unto the Lord,
and to die is to die unto the Lord,
so then whether we live or die,
we are the Lord's.

Sacred Mystery of all being, of our being,
consciously aware of our lives in Your light,
we worship.
We know that all will be well,
all will be well.
All manner of things will be well.
Amen.