

Earl Joseph Madary  
December 19, 2007

Based on John 11:20-27

Often in the past year and especially in the last several weeks I have felt like Martha who said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had really been here, Earl would not have died.” Where were you when we needed you? “Lord,” we said, “the one you love is ill with cancer.”

Our reaction is understandable. Here is a young, talented, gifted man; the richest part of his life has just begun. He is highly intelligent, good, shaped by humor and love. He is a treasured teacher and a trusted colleague. In a world of war and hate and discord and anger, he is open, friendly, peaceful, generous and trusting; he could paddle a canoe, bring a twelve-string guitar to life, and feed a houseful of people with a pot of something-or-other. He lived the Detroit dream – that the Lions would win a super bowl. And he so much loved. Earl loved God and all people, loved his wife Marci and children Rachel and Joseph—Earl was so passionately in love with life.

And then life is stolen from him, he was stolen from us. So we ask, Lord, where were you? There is no good answer really. But I do know from my private conversations with Earl over the past year that he felt the closeness of the Lord as he never had before.

The Gospel message tonight is a simple one, it is a message of life. Jesus said to Martha...I am the life. I not only have life, but I am life.

And so for Earl. Indeed we mourn, and yes, we are sad just as those disciples and Mary were sad and mourned on Calvary. We shall have to wait for the resurrection on the last day before we see Earl’s eyes light up again in delight, before we hear his gentle voice in prayer and song. And that is sad, no matter how deep our faith. But the thrilling truth remains: Earl is alive! More alive than he ever was before, because every bit of cancer, every bit of his

weakened humanity is past. There is now only love in the presence of love, in the presence of God.

And we who remain. We have our memories. But Earl is not merely a memory; he is part of us, of each of us. He is woven into the fabric of our lives – into each of our lives in a unique and distinct fashion. Who and what I am, Earl Joseph Madary has helped to shape. His courage and his laughter, his Christian confidence and his limitless love – these have seeped into me and I believe into each of us who knew him, loved him, and were touched in some way by him. For the way Earl lived, he is alive with God. By the way we live, let us keep Earl alive in our hearts.