

Thanksgiving for the Life of Lewis Bly  
I Corinthians 13 & John 14:1-61  
April 22, 2017

Love never ends.

That beautiful sentence is from today's epistle, I Corinthians 13,  
one of the readings chosen by the family.

You've likely heard it read on other occasions, mostly weddings.  
And it's entirely appropriate – a poetic description of love.  
St. Paul first used it to calm down conflict among  
the earliest Christians in Corinth.  
All good.

But my favorite context for it is the reason we gather today,  
a memorial service to give thanks for the life of one  
we have known and loved.  
I believe it is especially so as we honor Lewis Bly,  
a gentleman – and a gentle man –  
with that wonderfully impish gentle smile.  
His very life witnessed to unending love,  
68 years of which were spent in Holy Matrimony with dear Eileen.

Even with all that, we need to be together here today  
as family, friends and neighbors, priest and parish community --  
to remind ourselves in our sorrow,  
to uphold Eileen and family in their profound loss –  
of the truth that our parish namesake St. Paul shared so long ago:  
*Love never ends.*

For us as Christians, as Episcopalians,  
(and, my goodness, Lewis was a faithful one)  
we have just begun celebrating Easter.  
Contrary to popular culture, Easter was not over and done *last* Sunday  
but just getting started.  
This is the time during which we the church proclaim most eloquently  
God's love for us and all creation,

as shown by the life, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus,  
that love never ends.

In Christ, life -- and love -- is changed,  
but not ended.

Yes, we will miss Lewis terribly.

We will each miss him terribly for our own reasons.

Today we've seen and heard references to his life  
as an accomplished sailor,  
and that is fitting.

But knowing him later in life,

I cherish my memories of Lewis the "bus driver"

tooling around in his little Prius (it *is* Earth Day, after all)

to bring the 8:00 Ashlar group to church and adult forum.

I enjoyed alternating between teasing and thanking him  
for this kind deed.

That chapter is now ended and will be missed.

Each of you can surely call to mind other such instances,

both great and small, that you -- sadly -- will experience no more.

But love? That never ends.

By the grace of God in the power of Jesus' resurrection,

love never ends.

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