



Everett Blake Prentice
May 28, 1937 - April 20, 2010
Homily by Archdeacon Judy Walton

No two people are alike and it is that very uniqueness which makes us loved not only by our family and friends, but especially by God. That wonderful phrase of our Lord in the gospel about 'the hairs on our head being numbered by our heavenly Father', and that 'not even one sparrow can fall to the ground without God knowing about it,' is surely proof of the value God puts on every human life. Each of us is loved by God and given a purpose for our lives, a divine purpose. The hand of God has been laid on us all.

God's loving touch was laid upon Blake and the results of that grace were seen especially in the latter half of Blake's life. For it was then that Blake realized his living faith. Blake's faith was enhanced by his experience at several Flame weekends. It was there he strengthened his already budding faith which continued to be nurtured at All Saints' Church in Collingwood and continued here at St. Margaret's.

Blake committed himself to good causes. Whether it was collecting food at the doors of Loblaws for the Salvation Army Food Bank, working with his Kiwanis Group, or supporting young men in the Scouting movement, he was willing to go the extra mile. He was a volunteer at a local public school in Collingwood where he helped young children learn how to build and do simple carpentry. He loved to sing and joined the choir here. This is how God works in the lives of those he chooses.

The lessons of our lives teach us patience and increase our faithfulness. Each of us in our own lives has experienced hills and valleys, the good times and the bad times, the successes and failures, the joys and the sorrows. Blake was no exception. I know that each person here has heard at least one of Blake's stories about some time in his life, whether it was a hilltop experience of great pleasure or one of the sadder times in his life. Blake loved to 'chat' and tell you about his life. He had many stories to tell. In many ways he was like an open book.

We have a very short span of life given to us by God, and those who live the longest become deeply aware that this time is not given as much for our enjoyment, but rather to wrestle and struggle with what God calls us to be as his children. **None of us** is ever given sufficient time to work out our salvation or to figure out all of life's mysteries. **None of us** is ever given sufficient time to sink our roots too deeply into this world. Yet as we mature, we begin to understand we are just passing through this place and time. What we experience in our life time is only a small part of our journey

and as our earthly life ends, the journey continues. It is our confident hope that as we journey on into God's presence we shall experience and God's eternal love. This is the moment when death is transformed into life eternal. So death is not an end but a new beginning. The resurrection of Jesus helps put these things into perspective for each one of us as Christians.

In this vision of human life, then death is not the failure of therapy but the final healing. It is not a closed door but a threshold into a world where all tears will be wiped away and our hearts filled with unlimited joy.

As the poet has put it, "Death is the blowing out of the candle because the dawn has arrived." And that is our hope for all our friends who die, and indeed for ourselves - that as we shed this mortal body, we are clothed in the new spiritual body of the resurrection. As we heard read today, "we will not all die, but will all be changed, in moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet." And thus we will follow Christ into that place of unending peace. His promise is that when we get there, everything we have suffered or borne in this life will appear as nothing. Blake believed this. He knew it in his heart. I pray that for each one here today, you too may know it and believe it in your heart too.

And so now Blake has stretched out his tired hands for the last time and placed them into the hands of God and God has taken him to himself. Let us pray with confidence and gratitude for the eternal rest of Blake, God's friend and ours. Amen

Preached on April 26, 2010, at St. Margaret's, by Archdeacon Judy Walton