



## *Violet Mary Donnelly*

*December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1922 – March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012*

*Service Homily by the Rev. Stephen Pessah*

*presented on Saturday, March 31, 2012 at St. Margaret's*

I like that story in Luke's Gospel of the woman who had ten silver coins and lost one. (Luke 15:8-10)

It has only been recently that that I have thought of this parable in relation to a funeral sermon – but the more I consider the passage – the more I realize that what happened to the woman who lost the coin and what is happening to you right now is amazingly similar.

The first thing we discover when the woman loses her coin is that she feels the loss immediately! She doesn't wait around thinking it might turn up sometime in the future – but rather she responds to the loss immediately by lighting her lamp and searching passionately for the coin! The truth is she lost something that to her was extremely valuable and consequently it had a profound effect on her life! It affected her actions and it affected the way she interacted with friends and neighbours!

I want to suggest that in a similar manner – by losing Violet – you too have lost something or rather “someone” extremely valuable and precious. You have lost someone who brought charm and color and joy and meaning to your world – someone that has had and will continue to have a profound effect on your lives! You have lost someone who has no doubt imparted something very special to you both individually and collectively as a family – and that is what will live on in your hearts and minds – that is what – like the woman who found the coin – you will celebrate and talk about with friends and neighbours – and that is what will inevitably cause you to forge ahead in the coming days.

But that is also what causes you to grieve. Because it is always extremely difficult to lose something or “someone” we cherish deeply! It's at times like this that we can feel extremely overwhelmed by the waves of grief and despair and getting back to “normal” requires some effort.

We are, however, reminded from scripture of ways to take the first steps. It is here that we are told of the greater reality of life, namely the victory we have in Christ despite the temporary reality of pain and frustration that is so often the experience of humanity.

I know that Violet knew this victory in her life! It was no secret that Violet had - in fact - a very strong faith in God! I always sensed from Violet, despite her dementia issues, that she loved to be in church when she was able to come – she had a joy that was always evident to me! And her faith, I believe, expressed itself in her great passion for life and in her incredible desire to live it to the fullest!

For Violet, life was an “adventure” that was to be experienced profoundly and in various ways – whether it was exploring new places, creating amazing dishes from a simple potato – or shopping with an “attentiveness” - that I understand would exhaust even the most seasoned shoppers in her family - Violet knew the meaning of “joie-de-vive”!

This faith would also have expressed itself in her love for her family who knew that her “straight on” approach was her way of saying “I love you” and I care about what happens in your life and the person you become! The life and love she expressed to her family and community will no doubt cause her memory to remain firm in your hearts and minds!

And as you remember Violet I would also encourage you to remember Christ as he extends to you his offer of strength, comfort, and rest and all that will sustain you in the days ahead. May God grant us all the Grace necessary to mourn Violet’s passing, to celebrate her life, and to walk confidently in the days ahead. Amen.

*...by the Rev. Stephen Pessah*

