

S. Jane Klimisch Funeral Homily by Fr. Thomas Wordekemper OSB

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many dwellings.” Another soul has gone onward, upward, forward, God-ward, homeward. A dear Sister of ours, a pillar of this community, a cherished friend and mentor has gone heavenward to the Father’s house where there are many dwelling places prepared by Jesus for all who die in Him. Another of us has gone to live in eternity with Christ. Sr. Jane has found a new life in the heavenly mansion. Here she has the peace which the world cannot give and knows the comfort of the Good Shepherd. And here, if she is not singing God’s praises with the angels and saints, she is certainly directing them or accompanying them on the great heavenly organ!

What might that dwelling place look like? None of us knows or can even fathom what God has in store for us who love Him, for “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard....” But looking at the life, the person of S. Jane, as a living temple of the Holy Spirit, we might get a glimpse of what that dwelling might look like.

With her ever-ready, genuine smile and twinkling blue eyes, she must have a broad, open porch, surrounded by the lilacs she loved. The pasque flowers announcing spring (another of her favorites) have already poked through the lawn, bloomed and now blend with the green grass. Sunflowers, with bright faces that chase the sun across the sky, will soon follow. A long-haired cat plays tag with butterflies and bumblebees, scampering among a few dandelion puff balls. There are squirrels waving their tails like feather boas, chattering away in the upper reaches of walnut and catalpa trees, blending with the buzz of cicadas. There’s a swing on that porch gently swaying and squeaking in a summer breeze. The front door of the elegant Queen Anne style house, with its many windows, gables and turrets, is wide open. The breeze coming through the house draws the lace curtains fluttering gently through the open windows. Everything seems to say “Welcome! All are welcome here! Come in! Let’s visit for a spell.”

Of course, coming from the music room there is the soft tinkling of a piano accompanying the song of meadowlarks and robin. Is it the strains of a Bach prelude, or the haunting melody of Gregorian chant we hear? Or is it an original composition that is unmistakably “Janesque”? Whatever our ears are hearing it is beautiful and it joins the song of all creation giving praise to God the Creator. And one can be sure that whatever flows from the music room of Jane’s dwelling place, from those fingers through the keyboard to our ears, is meant for others to hear and enjoy, and is meant to honor the God of all gifts and talents, the God from whom all blessings flow!

There is also a cozy library, cool and dim, but warmly lit. A room where she enjoys both literature and poetry. A room where she appreciates....words...the literary turns of phrases, alliterations, metaphors, rhymes, assonances, etc. Truly a woman who embraced life-long learning. When one glances at the many books that grace the shelves, we see an eclectic collection. This room also has a writing table with typewriter and computer --- for Jane also enjoys writing and piecing together history, telling the story of this era in community life, that particular theme in liturgical music and celebration, this monastic house tradition, even the origin of the monastery bells and their particular chime ringing the quarter hours away. There are various pens and pencils, cards and paper too. For she prefers these tools for continuing her many, many friendships (professional and personal) through correspondence. Who doesn’t recall a note of thanks, a feast day/birthday card or short note written in her unique blend of calligraphy and Palmer method that always lifted our spirits?

Most important is her quiet room, her oratory. Here she communes with God, experiences the “Dulce refrigerium,” the sweet, cool refreshment of the Holy Spirit she sang so often in the great Pentecost sequence. Here she could pour out the struggles and darkness her soul experienced to the God who always listens; here her parched soul finds refreshment. Here too, she also listens with the ear of her heart to the “voice of her Beloved” calling to her, “Arise, my love, my fair one and come away.” Here too she saw with the eyes of her soul her Beloved, “leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills.” Here she drank deeply from the

wells of God's love, wisdom and life with others as spiritual director, mentor, companion, friend and confidante.

Truly an artist and "renaissance woman," her dwelling place also has a junk room. It would be nice if the junk room was in the attic, but that's inconvenient. It's on the 1st floor where it's handier because here the messy "stuff" of life is contained and often we must hurriedly throw something in there. This is the room whose door we like to keep shut, where company is not allowed, but whose stuff, despite our best efforts, seems to creep out once in a while even if it's from under the door! Here is where the occasional impatience resides, the dust bunnies of stubbornness swirl and the petulance of demands collect. Fortunately, the door isn't opened often, but it does happen.

Yes, there are many dwelling places in the Father's house. We are assured that our Lord has prepared a place for S. Jane and prepares a place for each of us. He has come to take her to Himself as He promised. He calls to her and says, "Arise my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!" We are saddened by our loss, but our hearts are not troubled because we **do** believe in God and believe also in Jesus. We **believe** He is the way, the Truth and the Life. We believe that our dear Sister Jane, who preferred nothing whatever to Christ, now takes up residence in that heavenly place prepared for her.

The Dominican, Bede Jarrett, wrote a poem on death that seems fitting.

Death is Only a Horizon

We give them back to you, O Lord
who first gave them to us;
as you did not lose them in the giving,
so we do not lose them in the return.

Not as the world gives do you give,
O Lover of souls.
For what is yours is ours also,
if we belong to you.

Lift us up, strong Song of God,
that we may see further.
Strengthen our faith that we may see beyond the horizon.

And while you prepare a place for us,
as you have promised,
prepare us also for that happy place;
that where you are we may be also,
with those we have loved, forever.

Gentle Jane, who loved music, may you sing God's praises for eternity with the saints and angels.

Gentle Jane, who loved words, may you know **the** Word in eternity.

Gentle Jane, who loved community, may you live in the embrace of the Trinity for eternity.