

Funeral Mass Homily of Francis H Lori

I. Introduction

A. Thank you so much for your presence here this morning. I join my dear Mom and Dad and my brother Joe in thank you, Archbishop Kurtz, for concelebrating this funeral liturgy, together with my brother priests, including my former and current priest-secretaries, Monsignor Zielonka and Father Bianco.

B. In a special way, I'd like to thank you, Father Ken, for your pastoral care and love for my parents, together with Sister Agnes and Sister Diana. And thanks to the Volunteers of America, led locally by David Brock, my brother Frankie had a wonderful home. My family and I thank you and your co-workers. Frankie's special caregiver and friend is LaTroya. You were always there for my brother – bringing him for home-visits, keeping vigil when he was ill, but mostly sharing a mutual friendship with Frankie. And so we offer you our heartfelt condolences and our thanks.

C. Let me also thank so many family members and friends as well as Mom and Dad's fellow-residents here at Providence-Diversicare, together with the leadership and staff of this home. During these days after Frankie's passing, all of you have surrounded us with love and prayers. We shall never forget your kindness.

D. My brother Joe and I wish to thank you, Mom and Dad, for the example of love you gave us in your care for our brother, Frankie. We saw you live a special vocation to love that required of you sacrifices big and small— whether it was those many car trips to Muscatatuck, or the things you did without, your vigils at Frankie's bedside in time of illness, or the difficult decisions that confronted you. In all these things and more, you taught us what love and commitment really mean. Truly do we thank you!

II. Hidden from the Wise and the Learned

A. Today's Gospel from Saint Matthew really helps us know who Frankie was and is – and why he is precious in God's sight and ours. Jesus addresses his Father in heaven thus: "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and learned [that is, the mysteries of the Kingdom of God], you have revealed them to the childlike." My brother Frankie had no degree in theology, really no formal education at all. By the world's standards, he was neither wise nor learned. Yet I believe that the Lord Jesus and his Father touched Frankie's childlike soul with a spiritual awareness of their divine love.

B. At some deep level, known only to the Holy Spirit, Frankie knew he was loved by God. And Frankie knew how to pray – he said the fastest Our Father in the Western Hemisphere and grace before meals also moved along at a pretty good clip. Nor did Frankie mind going to church, even when I was preaching!

C. The Lord who judges the heart and not appearances found in Frankie a heart of innocence that would teach us all about love – whether it was those times he looked intently into our eyes, or gave us a kiss, or sang to us – his favorite song was, "You Are My Sunshine". In moments such as these we discovered that the Lord's yoke is easy, his burden light.

III. No More Weeping

A. It will not do, of course, for us to gloss over the tremendous challenges of Frankie's life. They were intellectual, emotional, and physical— especially as he grew older and his health declined. There's no glossing over the tears he shed – tears and frustration shared by all of us who were and are a part of Frankie's life.

B. Where would we be without our faith? Today's reading from the Book of Revelation tells us that even in this "valley of tears" we already share in the new and risen life of Jesus... and that, when we get to heaven, we will fully share in that new life Jesus won for us by the tears and suffering of the Cross.

C. With ardent hope and love beyond telling, we commend Frankie to the Lord— confident that he has reached heaven where God will "wipe away every tear from

[his] eyes, where there is no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away.”

IV. Conclusion

A. The “new order” established by Christ’s victory over sin and death is much more than the mere absence of pain and sorrow. It is rather a blessed condition, in which God’s children are transformed, fully alive with God’s own life, love, and beauty. “What we shall later be,” Saint John writes, has not yet come to light...” but for Frankie, it has come to light... as now he shines, brighter than sunshine.

B. Give him, O Father, everlasting life and joy and give to us, O Father, a childlike soul, so that we too can rejoice in the mysteries of your Kingdom.