

Through sorrow, joy, Malooly family stays close

Forty-eight years old seems too young to die. The hole a man's death leaves in his family never seems to shrink as they forge ahead without him.

In 1965, Bishop W. Francis Malooly's father died of cancer at that age. Two years prior, the family knew they had little time left in which to cherish him; he died a week shy of the time given by the doctor.

William Francis Malooly Sr. was a Loyola College in Maryland graduate and a chemist at Armco Steel.

The bishop was then 21, the oldest of the four Malooly offspring. The youngest was 12.

"There was no question in our mind," he said, "that we were going to move from this life to the next life and it would be a long stretch before we would see Dad, but we were all going to be together."

Bishop Malooly's sister, Martha Malooly Hackman, said the family missed him very much, "especially his wonderful presence and example."

It was left to their mother, Rosemary Murphy Malooly, to keep life on track, to ensure a solid Catholic education for her children and to maintain their Parkville home. The love of her life never left her heart.

"Mom was a widow for 41 years," said Mrs. Hackman, "but she always considered herself still married to Dad."

Their mother died in 2006 at age 92 following a stroke. The family gathered around her bed, as they did for their father, to share her last eight days with prayers, the rosary and a Mass celebrated by the bishop.

"Mom was ready to go," said Bishop Malooly, "and was wondering why it was taking the Lord so long to come; so it was nice to be able to help her on her journey."

Mrs. Hackman said that at the time of their mother's death, Bishop Malooly was the family's "dependable mainstay and loving brother and uncle. He has a keen sense of the right thing to do in all instances and respects. His excellent judgment and Christian values are a reflection of our parents' love and guidance."

Through bidding goodbye to their parents, said Bishop Malooly, "we had quality time with both as they were making the transition. ... There's no question that our faith played an important role."

To celebrate someone's death is not difficult for the priest at heart.

"It's not a state, it's simply a moment," he said. "The life is no longer contained in the body but it never stops, and there's nothing wrong with that."

The Maloolys have remained close through the years.

"Our family life was a happy and fulfilled one," said Mrs. Hackman, sharing her brother's stance that family has always been of great importance.

"He particularly enjoys our close family relationship," she said of the bishop, "and has been supportive of his fellow priests, his many friends and us."