

Monika Liv Harris - Memorial Service
Thoughts from Mike Baird
22 December 2005

- Since I've known we would conduct this service here and that I would be speaking I've pondered what I would say
 - I did not know Monika well
 - Met her twice - briefly
 - Spoke to her on the phone half dozen times
- Two incidents yesterday led me to the thoughts I would share with you today
- Julie (Sister in law) came over to my house to drop off photographs of Monika
 - As we spoke together for a while she said: "this makes you stop and think"
 - As she said this I knew at that instant the direction my words should take today
 - Yes, death makes us stop and think about things we might not normally consider
 - Yes, death makes us stop and think about what is important to us
- Later in the evening as I scanned in and touched up the photographs on my computer I found myself pausing and asking:
 - Who are you?
 - What does this picture tell me about you?
 - Later - You are gone from this earth life now. Are you never to be seen by your family again other than these photographs?
 - Is this all that is left of you? Is your life just the sum of some photographs and memories and the effect you had on people?
 - Memories are good
 - Words from the opening hymn (#293 verse 3) read:
 - When such a friend from us departs, we hold forever in our hearts a sweet and hallowed memory
 - Steven's words reminded of enduring scenes of Monika painted in the minds of those who knew her with colors beautiful

- The ancient Prophet Job asked the question I asked differently, he asked:
 - “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14.)
- Some of us have perhaps pondered that question as I have
 - Maybe before or perhaps in the time since Monika has passed away.
 - Maybe we framed the question with different words
 - Or perhaps some of us have pondered this question in contemplating our own passing – as Julie said – this makes you stop and think
 - What is important?
 - What happens after death?
- I have thought about it. When we die are we gone, never to be seen again?
 - She whom we love dearly, is she now nothing more than memories we share?
 - Does she live on as more than reflections in our lives?
- As I pondered the photographs last night the words of the scripture came to me:
 - " Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God"
- These words are an affirmation that we have great worth
- That Monika has great worth in the sight of God
- It is my belief that we all have great worth in his sight just as our own children have great worth in our sight and perhaps more
- It is my belief that because of the worth we have in God's sight that death is not the end
- It is my belief, hope and faith that death is not the end of our journey.

- Let me share some thoughts about life's journey and our worth
- First thought is found in the words of the poet William Wordsworth:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

—William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimation of Immortality"

- The poet speaks of our birth and our worth in the eyes of God
 - The lines from the poem that resonates within me are
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
- This speaks of our worth as children of our Father in Heaven
- Second thought I would share about life's journey comes from this time of year.
 - This time of year we pause from our busy lives and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ
 - We sing songs of the season – about Christ
 - Away in a manger
 - The first noel, Joy to the World

- We'll be singing, at Sandy's request, to close this service Silent night (Hymn 204)

Silent night! Holy night! All is calm all is bright round yon virgin mother and Child. Holy infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight! Glories stream from heaven afar; Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia! Christ, the Savior is born!

Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus Lord at thy birth.

- And words from the hymn, I know that my Redeemer lives, that Erricka Brownell played in her piano solo (Hymn 136)

He lives to comfort me when faint,
 He lives to hear my soul's complaint,
 He lives to silence all my fears,
 He lives to wipe away my tears,
 He lives to calm my troubled heart,
 He lives all blessings to impart

- These hymns speaks of our worth as children of our Father in Heaven
 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"
 - Who came with the redeeming grace spoken of in Silent Night
 - Who came to "silence all my fears" and to "wipe away my tears"

- The 3rd thought I'd share about life's journey:

- Job answered his own question of "If a man die, shall he live again" later when he said:

For I ^aknow that my ^bredeemer liveth, and that ^che shall ^dstand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though after my skin worms destroy this ^abody, yet in my ^bflesh shall I ^csee God: (Job 19:25-26)

- And finally Jesus said: I am the ^aresurrection, and the ^blife: (John 11:25)

The witnesses of prophets and the words of the Savior give me the belief, hope and faith such that I can say my heart burns with the knowledge that the bands of death have been broken and though separated now by death from loved ones, one day we may be reunited with them.

They live on as more than just memories painted with colors beautiful in our minds or as reflections in our lives

Truly as the poet said, "The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, has elsewhere its setting".

These thoughts I leave with you in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, Amen

Monika Liv Harris

*September 1, 1973 –
December 18, 2005*

*Memorial Service
December 22, 2005*

- Conducting: Bishop Mike Baird
- Organist: Erricka Brownell
Chorister: Nancy Baird
- Opening Hymn: "Each life that touches ours for good" (Hymn 293)
- Invocation: Idida Wall
- Life Sketch: Steven Harris
- Piano Solo: "I know that my Redeemer lives"
Erricka Brownell (Hymn 136)
- Remarks: Bishop Mike Baird
- Closing Hymn: "Silent Night" (Hymn 204)
- Benediction: Bishop Mike Baird