

Officer Chuck Cassidy Homily

Judy, Katie, Colby, John, Mrs. Cassidy and Tom,

Cardinal Rigali called yesterday and asked me to convey on his behalf his regret for not being here today – he is out of the country – he asked me to assure you of his continued support and prayers and that he is with you spiritually.

Bishop McFadden will read Cardinal Rigali's statement toward the end of our celebration.

To the many law enforcement officers – Cardinal Rigali assures you of his prayers for your safety and consolation during these days of sorrow.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. These words of Jesus Christ gather us together today.

Formal Greeting

You are welcomed in our Cathedral as we pray offering our support to Chuck's family and friends.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. Christ's words tells us exactly what happened to Chuck on Wednesday, October 31, 2007.

He went to Dunkin Donuts to check on them –

employees who knew him by name and people he knew by name,

friends in his community. Chuck grew up in the District he served so faithfully.

He knew us by name and we know him by name, like Brian in the town watch,

Jim and Doc at school, Kenny in the local pizza shop and many others.

At that moment, in that donut shop, virtue and vice met. It may appear, vice wins but

we know in our hearts, vice may win the moment but Virtue always wins the day.

How do we know virtue always wins the day? Because – while vice focuses on things,

virtue focuses on people.

Start with the immediate response of the police for their brother –

No police officer sought safety inside, rather the officers – all of them – hit the streets.

The great virtue demonstrated at Einstein Hospital- the many accommodations, kind

words and prayers offered by the hospital staff.

The millions of little things done with great love – virtues –

done for the Cassidy family over these days:

the many Masses offered

the prayers and devotions said

food – lots of food

generous donations – like the little girl who walked into the 35th with her mom

and gave her dollar for the Cassidy family.

Moments of silence and prayer at games

Arm bands and hats

Soccer teams who painted their faces with Chuck's badge number

Cards and condolences

Flags at ½ staff

And the shrine on North Broad Street.

Prayers, meaningful gestures, heartfelt reaching out because of this senseless act of violence.

Vice may have won the moment

but thanks to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ,

and the faith and generosity of so many virtue has won the days.

I spoke to some of the Officers at the 35th – they joked about Chuck –

His cell phone – they told me the only person at the district with the number had it so he could call Chuck about overtime for his family

His glasses – how he put them on and took them off the same way every time, settling them down on the end of his nose

His running skills versus the running skills of his Captain

His left-handed salute – after saying, I had enough fun for the day boss.

The Officers also could not stop talking about how they admired Chuck:

How he mentored young officers – taught them to be calm and respectful of everyone

Went out of his way to greet them

Taught them to pay attention to the littlest things like stopping outside a school to wave and talk to the children so they know police officers are their friends

And one Officers offered this thought:

I want to be a man like him, a family man, when I get older- I want to be like him

He never said a bad thing, he never complained.

If I am like Chuck when I get older, my family will be very blessed.

Their descriptions echo the words of St. Paul in today's 2nd reading –
in everything you do, act without grumbling or arguing, prove yourself innocent and
straightforward, children, children of God...

As Chuck's children and I talked about their father:

they talked about his ability to make them laugh – even if they were mad, they would
leave the room and then just start laughing

the advice he gave them, how he was like their personal library

how he always had fun,

how they liked hugging him and how their head always fit right there

and that he was always there for them.

When I listened to people who knew and loved Chuck, I heard them describing a man of virtue,
A man who loved, loves and will always love his family.

In his homily for Armed Forces and the Police on November 19, 2000, Pope John Paul II
reflected on the strength necessary for officers to do their duty to the full.

Speaking to the officers assembled about officers who had died he said:

“many of them believed in Christ, and His words illumined their existence and gave an
exemplary value to their sacrifice. They made the Gospel their code of conduct. May the
example of your colleagues, who in faithfully doing their duty reached the heights of heroism
and, perhaps, of holiness, be an example to you.”

Judy, Katie, Colby, John, Mrs. Cassidy and Tom,

Chuck laid down his life for his friends

Virtue has and will always win the day

Chuck has faithfully fulfilled his duty reaching the heights of heroism.

As you said goodbye to Chuck in the hospital, you used those most important words:

Thank you and I love you.

On behalf of the many people praying with you today –

For the gift of Chuck

I say

thank you

and

we love you.