

**MESSAGE OF CARDINAL RIGALI
FOR THE FUNERAL OF OFFICER CHARLES E. ACHUCK@ CASSIDY
CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL
NOVEMBER, 7, 2007**

I am sorry not to be able to be with you today because of my being in Rome. However, I am united with you at this moment in prayer and solidarity. At the time of the tragedy last week, I was fortunate to have been able to visit Officer Cassidy in Einstein Hospital and to pray with his loving family as they all attempted, with God's help, to cope in anguish and pain, with such a difficult situation. Once again, I extend my deep sympathy and prayerful support to Chuck's wife, Judy, to his children Katie, Colby and John, to his mother, brother, and all the family.

While Officer Cassidy's Funeral takes place in this Cathedral, the Mother Church of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we are very much united to Chuck's own Parish community of Saint Jerome in Northeast Philadelphia. His pastor, Father Joseph Graham, and all the members of the Parish have all been so supportive of the Cassidy Family at this tragic time.

I am sure that, as this statement is being read, many members of our dedicated Philadelphia Police Department will be present. Each day you go forth from your homes so that you may work to keep our own homes, streets and all our citizens safe. When one of you is harmed, all of us are hurt. When one of you dies in defense of one of us, you die in defense of all of us. In the Gospel, Jesus tells us: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends". In laying down his life for us, Officer Cassidy fulfilled a service to all of us, to our City, and to the greater community. I know that his family is consoled in their indescribable grief by that realization, and I know that his fellow officers share in that pride. As you all experience sorrow at the loss of a husband, father, son, brother, and fellow officer, you also rightfully claim pride in his fidelity.

Among the many emotions, which fill us this day, we acknowledge that we have come face to face with the mystery of iniquity, which causes the sorrow that we experience this day. On its part, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia will continue, by preaching, by teaching and by every available resource to proclaim the Gospel of peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Gospel of peace proclaims the dignity and worth of every human person. It proclaims the need to reject violence in our communities, our homes, our hearts. It urges repentance and inspires hope for our beloved City and beyond.

At the end of this Funeral Liturgy, at what we call the Final Commendation, you will hear the words "in the sure and certain hope." The death of Jesus on the Cross, which humanly speaking was a tragedy of great injustice, guarantees the hope that we may share in the glory of His Resurrection. It is that hope that offers consolation to Chuck's loved ones on this day. With Saint Paul we are convinced that "Hope will not leave us disappointed."

May the God of peace console you all.

