

Astrid Funeral/April 30, 2022

Nichole, Sienna, family and friends of Astrid, grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thank you for being here today as we say good-bye to our dear Astrid. I promised to give her a proper Episcopal send off and I couldn't do that without your presence here today. So, thank you for being here.

Astrid is beloved by God and she is also very dear to me. She was a wonderful lady who brought smiles to everyone she met and around here she always liked to be in the middle of whatever was happening – from worship, to meals, to Bible study, including Bibles and Brews at the Brewing Company.

If anything was going on at the church or being held by the church someplace else, Astrid was always there. And if we needed anything, or if she thought we needed something, she would always come with a gift in tow. She stocked our freezer with cakes and donuts.

She was generous and caring, and she never failed to say – I love you.

I think the hardest thing about today is that Astrid was always our Energizer Bunny. She kept going and going. There seemed to be nothing that could keep her down. I think her motto must have been, “if there is a will, there is a way.”

She surprised us on so many occasions when she did what the rest of us would have thought impossible. Many times she would have to go to Denver and needed a ride. None of us could take her, but she was never upset by it. She knew she could get a ride and she did. I don't even know if she knew the people who drove her, but she had to go, so she got there and back.

And often, when she didn't have a ride to church, she would just walk up the hill by herself taking her time, and sometimes someone would stop and give her a lift.

If Astrid wanted something to happen, it was going to happen, and that makes today hard, because we are so use to her making things happen. But, maybe she chose to leave us on March 15, Good Friday this year, as a final testimony to her faith, because Astrid was super faithful. She loved God and she loved the Church.

Whenever I went to visit Astrid, the first thing she wanted, before I even set my things down, was Holy Communion. That was the most important thing about our visit. She wanted to be sure to receive God's gifts of love and grace without being interrupted by anyone, and so that is what we always did first thing.

Today we will also have Holy Communion, the Eucharist, not only because it was so important to Astrid, but because in Holy Communion we not only commune with Jesus, but we also commune with all of our loved ones from all times and all places.

Today, Astrid is joining us at this table with Jesus, and I'm really glad that you are here today to join her in this meal that was so important to her.

Astrid died on Good Friday, the day we remember Jesus being crucified on the cross, the day he died. The night before he was killed on the cross, Jesus had the Last Supper with his disciples, the meal we celebrate here every time we have communion.

In the Jewish tradition, food stays in your body for three days and the food you eat with others makes you one with them, which means that Jesus takes our Holy Communion meal with him into his death and his resurrection. Jesus takes us with him as he dies and is risen from the dead.

You'll notice all of the Easter lilies decorating the sanctuary. They trumpet the good news of the resurrection. Jesus did not stay dead. God brought him back to life and promises to do the same for all of us, rejoining us together with all of our loved ones from throughout history. This is a foretaste of the feast that is to come where we will be reunited with God and one another in resurrection.

In Holy Communion, we join Jesus in his death and resurrection as we remember the promise of our own resurrection and reunification with all those whom we love. It is no wonder that this meal was so important to Astrid, and perhaps that is what gave her her inner strength. Christ is risen from the dead, so there is nothing that can stop us.

Today I am wearing a pink dahlia in my hair. I left some in the back for others to wear as well. Astrid told me that they are her favorite flower and it is in her honor that I wear this flower today, reminiscent of how she would always wear a flower in her hair.

The dahlia symbolizes inner strength, the ability to withstand harsh conditions, gracefulness, honesty, kindness, service, and the ability to stand out in a crowd. That sure sounds like Astrid to a tee.

The only thing missing in the dahlia description is that Astrid was really smart as well. She was always telling me things I didn't know and she was able to recite things she memorized a long time ago, like the poems Jerusalem by Blake and Casabianca by Hemans. She also loved reading. She would read lots of books and she always read the daily newsletter at The Suites so that she could do the puzzle and learn something new. I will really miss talking with her.

And I have no doubt that Astrid will be sorely missed by all of you as well, but I also know that we can all find our peace in the good news of Christ and his resurrection, knowing that we all will be reunited with Astrid and all those whom we love in the resurrection. This sorrow, which is real, is only fleeting and so in the midst of sadness we live in hope, because we are beloved by God and we are a death and resurrection people.

Thanks be to God. Amen.