

My Notes for November 13

On behalf of the McGowan Family, welcome to Maryknoll, and to this 5th Anniversary Memorial Mass for Felix and Patrick McGowan. Thanks so much to each of you for coming this morning.

Introduction of Mass Celebrant Rev. William Coy, M.M. and Organist, Rev. Carl Meulemans, M.M.

Also present today are: Sister Mary Jeremie Crowley, M.M. and Sister Ann Catherine Ryan, M.M., who were among the first Maryknoll Sisters to arrive in Bolivia in the early 1940s, and who served with Felix when he arrived in 1950; Sister Bernadette Lynch (Peru) who had known Felix there; and, last but not least, three members of the incomparable, world-famous Maryknoll Sisters' choir! – Sisters Julie Miller, Carol Hassey and Ann Hayden. Thank you so much for coming.

PS: You'll note I left off the citation for today's Gospel reading – sorry! It's Matthew 25:31-40.

Mass was then offered (with songs interspersed)

Following the Mass – Thoughts in Remembrance

(Maureen's)

As I thought about “five years”, this week, I suddenly remembered – as though I had never thought of it before – that there is no time with God. Time is a human construct, something we have devised to help manage our social lives. But when Felix and Patrick slipped away, 5 years ago – they entered a realm beyond where I can follow, with my time management or any other skills – I cannot wrap my mind around the concepts of God, or forever, or “gone.” At the same time that I was thinking such thoughts, in the door came the current issue of *The Catholic Worker*. Often, I put it aside for later, and normally would have done so in this busy week – but instead, I picked it up and read it through. As most of you know, Felix loved the *Worker*, and had been its editor for about three years – and so, maybe my noticing it this week was his inspiration. A particular quote caught my eye – from the poet Czeslaw Milosz, and it seemed to address my thoughts: Milosz writes:

“...the secret and inviolable private being of every person can only be truly loved and understood by a compassionate and personal God.”

So, I take comfort today in the thought that while there is much that we know, about Felix and Patrick -- and also much that we don't know, and will never know ...much that we understand, and maybe much more that we don't understand, and will never understand – it's all right. Because we know they are OK -- they are now “slan awalya”, as the Irish say – “safe home”, in the embrace of God, where they are completely loved, and completely understood, for themselves as they are. That's all we need to know. At least, that's all I need to know, today.

For me, this is a letting go time, a final “good bye” time, and a time to say thank you, to Felix and to Patrick, for all the love, and the beauty, and the family, that each brought into my life. I hope that our gathering today might provide something for each of you that you might find good and useful.

Aunt Betty's Memory to share (via mail):

“I would like to share a memory of Felix. When we made the trip up to Toronto with our family (our youngest, Keith, was 6 months, John 4, and Christopher 3), Felix would sit down on the floor with all of the children and make up stories for them. They were entranced, both at the “real” stories, and the gentle, lilting manner in which Felix told them. I will always hold that memory in my heart.”