

How Will We Be Remembered?

This morning, I had the distinct honor and privilege of officiating the funeral of one of the most beautiful souls I have encountered. After being in healthcare for 18 years, ten of which were spent as a hospice chaplain, I have officiated hundreds of funerals. Whenever I officiate a funeral, I work with the assumption that people want to hear less from me and more about the stories of their loved one. It has never failed me, from my first funeral nearly 35 years ago until today. **People want to remember.** They want to feel a connection to the person they have lost and will not see again on this earth.



But this Celebration of Life was unique. Probably a dozen or more people stood and spoke, and **one common theme emerged:** this beautiful soul was not someone you met and forgot. This was someone you met and by whom you were deeply impacted.

I know that was true for me.

I remember how deeply I was impacted upon meeting this beautiful person as a patient on our oncology unit. The patient was lying in bed, suffering from intense pain, just days from transitioning from this life to the next and drifting in and out of lucidity. Yet, when lucid, this patient showed tremendous concern for their spouse and daughter, speaking of how wonderful they were and how they deserved to be treated as the special gifts they were. With all that was happening, the focus was not on self but on others, the family this patient had nurtured and cared for over decades.

I will never forget this beautifully selfless person.

It really got me thinking: This is the type of person we should all strive to be.

When people stand at the podium at our own Celebration of Life, will they remember someone who positively impacted the people we encountered? Will they recall someone who was selfless and put the needs of others before their own? Will they remember someone who laughed, danced, saw the good in people, and enjoyed life, like the person whose funeral I officiated today?

Or will they remember something else?

We all make positive impacts on the lives of our patients and their families; there is no disputing that. But let us also strive to make a positive impact on the lives of our family members, friends, acquaintances, coworkers, and even the strangers we pass on the street. Together, our seemingly small acts of kindness, compassion, and selflessness can have an enormous impact on a hurting world.

Prayer

May we learn to walk through this world with humility,
seeking not only our own good, but the good of those around us.

May we have the courage to empty ourselves of pride,
to loosen our grip on position, recognition, and self-interest,
and to become servants of one another.

Teach us to notice those who are hurting,
to honor the dignity of every person we encounter,
and to place compassion before convenience.

May our lives be marked by kindness, humility, and selfless love,
so that when our journey is complete,
others may remember not simply what we accomplished,
but how they were changed for the better because our paths crossed.

May we leave this world having loved well,
served faithfully,
and made the lives of others a little brighter.

Amen.

I consider it a privilege to serve the patients, families, and staff at San Antonio Regional Hospital. We are here to provide a supportive presence during what can often be difficult moments. If you would like to speak with a chaplain, please call Ext. 26326, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.



SAN ANTONIO REGIONAL HOSPITAL