

**A Good Word for Betty Cremens**  
**April 2, 2007**

The words of Scripture that were read earlier are indeed true, and in them we find words of comfort. Indeed, nothing separates us from the love of God – not \_\_\_\_\_

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not life, and not even death separates us from the love of God. As a matter of fact, it is our Blessed Hope that today Betty knows more about the love of God than we can know in this lifetime. So the passage we read earlier is appropriate for today. But there is another passage that I couldn't get out of my mind as I thought about Betty Cremens. In Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to his friend and colleague Timothy these words kept ringing in my ears all week as I thought of Betty: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day.* (II Timothy 4.7-8)

Betty fought a 25 year fight with cancer. I look at her as a tower of strength and optimism – never letting that “C” word get the best of her. She has now finished Earth's race and through it all, she kept the faith. Her family says that Betty enjoyed “pomp and circumstance” kinds of things, so I couldn't help but smile as I pictured Betty with her “crown of righteousness.” She must be adding some class to heaven's glory today. With Handel's Water Music Suite playing, surely Betty must be basking in the glow of the love of God. It is our Hope.

Betty loved family. She was a devoted daughter, a doting mother and grandmother, a faithful sister, and a loving wife. \_\_\_\_\_

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But as Betty’s pastor, I saw her as a tower of strength and optimism.

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Some folks have what seems like more than their share of hardships. It seems to me that that is part of Al and Betty’s story. But Betty, and as she called him “Sonny,” weathered life’s storms together. Faithful. Strong. Full of strength and hope. Yes, indeed, together they fought the good fight of life’s adversities and disappointments and griefs in ways that inspire us all. And as Betty finished her leg of the race, Sonny cared for her with grace and dignity – for better for worse/in sickness and in health. Al, well done, good and faithful servant. Your commitment to her, your whole-hearted belief that her strength and optimism would pull her through again was amazing. But after all was said and done, you both accepted that fact that medicine can’t fix everything.

About three years ago, I was in the hospital with another church member awaiting surgery. We were back in the pre-surgery holding pattern waiting. Finally it was time, and as we walked alongside the stretcher to say our goodbyes, I looked up and saw Betty waiting in her own holding pattern. She had not wanted anyone to know that she was there, but when our eyes met she burst into tears. She seemed so glad to see a familiar face. Sonny was made to wait outside in the waiting room and she was all alone. One of the perks of being clergy is having access to holy, sacred places like pre-op holding rooms. Betty's cancer had resurfaced and I held her hand. She was afraid, and I hope I helped ease some of the anxiety. I'm serious about those sterile hospital spaces – they are holy and sacred ground. And so when I asked her last week in her hospital room if she was scared, I was glad her answer was “no.” Disappointed? Yes. Scared? No. I believe that God's healing touch that day was peace that passes understanding. It was a gift from God that she received with strength and optimism. “Betty, you are going to be fine,” I told her. And I believe she is – for she fought the good fight, she finished the race, she kept the faith, and now she wears her crown with all the strength and optimism she can muster.