

Church of the Good Shepherd  
and  
St. John the Evangelist

**Mass of Christian Burial**  
**August 18, 2004**  
**Fr. Bill McGinty**

**“John Jackley”**

John has come home. He has come home to Edna, Matamoras, Port Jervis, and to all his relatives and friends that he loved so much. This is a sained deity that Jo-Allyson, Brian, Dylan, and Kelly have performed for him. He has come home to this Church of the Good Shepherd and St. John the Evangelist where he prayed, worshipped, ministered, and lived out the Gospel for so many years. It has been a long journey from upstate New York, as a little boy, to a church and diocese full of friends. Today, Jesus the Lord welcomes his disciple home.

Welcome to this service of Christian burial in honor of the Reverend John Jackley. It is so appropriate that we gather for this service, in this church where John worshipped and broke bread with us for so many years. Here as the Body of Christ, we gather with Jo-Allyson, Brian, Dylan, and all his friends to complete a journey that began seventy five years ago with John's baptism.

Seventy-five years ago Jesus the Lord called John to follow him and be his disciple just as he calls each one of us in baptism. The white robe he wore that day was symbolic that he now belonged to Christ. For John this was not to remain religious symbolism, but was to become a lived reality. For in answering Christ's call to serve, he once more wore the white robe that marked him as a disciple of the Lord. In a sense the words God addressed to Jeremiah when he chose him to be his prophet were also true of John:

“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born I sanctified you. I ordained you as a prophet to the nations.”

God breaks into many a life when he comes looking for a particular person. Jesus tells Nathaniel in the Gospel: “Before Philip called you when you were under the fig tree, I saw you!” Jesus saw John all those years ago and he called him. Was it during those many years when he proclaimed God's word in this church as a lay reader? Was it because here on this sanctuary he was close to the things of God and God's Spirit seeped into his soul and prepared him for ministry and the work God had destined him to do?

Either way, John responded to Christ's call in his life just as the apostles did as they cleared their nets and Jesus approached them by the Sea of Galilee and said: “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men!”

From that day, when the bishop laid hands on John and presented him with the Book of the Gospels, he did indeed become a Fisher of Men and set out to serve Christ's Church. The good that he did, the Gospel he preached is now written in the great book of the kingdom of God.

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and

## St. John the Evangelist

Today, as his brothers and sisters of the Gospel we gather to celebrate John's life as a disciple, a husband, and a father. It is with a sense of pride that we today gather to bring our brother home. Home to God! Home to the kingdom he preached. Home to the reward of everlasting life with God who loved him and who he loved and worshipped with his whole being. Today, we remember the words of St. Paul, the great apostle and know how applicable they are to John today for in 2 Timothy 6 he writes:

“For I am already poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

John kept the faith and more. He passed that faith onto child and adult alike, to rich and poor, and to all he came in contact with. The Great Quilt that is our beautiful Diocese of Bethlehem is richer for the time he spent laboring to stitch the kingdom of God and Jesus' teaching into its fabric.

In our service today we remember Edna and with her the fact that John's life was bound up in family, and marriage and it was here that God chose to pour out his grace and his love. It was a love that John passed onto others epitomized in St. Paul's beautiful words of Corinthians 13; words that John preached, John lived, and John deserves today.

“Love is patient; love is kind; love does not envy; nor is it full of itself. Love bears all things, believes all things, helps all things, and endures all things. Love never fails.”

Today we thank our heavenly Father for John's life. We thank Jo-Allyson on behalf of the Diocese of Bethlehem and the churches and communities of faith where John served, particularly this church, and Christ Church, Stroudsburg.

As a veteran, a mason, and a minister of the Gospel, John lived a fruitful and meaningful life. We pray today that he enjoys the heavenly rewards of his labor because we remember those words of Jesus, our Savior:

“Come to me all ye who labor, and are burdened. For my flesh is real food and my blood, real drink. Come and receive the reward of the kingdom of my Father.”

In the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6, the apostles choose seven disciples and lay hands on them as deacons:

“Seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, given to prayer and to ministry. And they chose seven whom they set before the apostles. When they prayed, they laid hands on them. And the word of God spread and the number of disciples multiplied.”

Today, John stands in a line of great deacons who have served Christ's Church. Perhaps the words of Stephan, the first deacon and the first Christian martyr, are John's words today:

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“Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

Let us pray.

Lord, we present to you your servant John, a man of kindness and compassion, a man of faith and a minister of your word. Place him in your kingdom, robed in the white of your saints where he may continue to bless us as we pray for him today and all those he loved. This we asked through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen +