

## **EULOGY - ANDY TARBAY JULY 7, 2017**

In 1939 excavations began under St. Peter's basilica in Rome, which eventually led to the uncovering of the remains of St. Peter himself, buried under the high altar. Under the Vatican there is a vast pagan cemetery, as well as Christian tombs and graves mixed in. I'm convinced that early in the excavations, the grave of a relative of Andy Tarbay's was discovered. The name of this distant relative of Andy's who was a member of the early Christian community was Flavius Statilius Olympius. His friends had obviously recalled him with special fondness. The inscription on his grave was "He had a joke for everyone and he never quarreled."

Such was Andy. Andy knew well what pain and suffering was. I witnessed for years the patience and struggles he went through when he cared for his beloved wife Julia. He had his fair share of suffering in his life, and in his 94 years he also observed it often enough in others. But Andy did not react with depression and pessimism. Like the early Christian buried in the Vatican, Andy always had a joke, and he used humor and laughter and a big smile to help brighten the day, chase away the shadows and dark clouds, and make the difficulties of life a little more tolerable and bearable. Sometimes he exhibited humor even when it wasn't deliberate. There was the time Andy came to church with a hole in his pocket, and all his change fell down his pant leg and into the cuff of his pants. When he walked his jangling echoed in the church, but he couldn't hear it himself. Finally it was pointed out to him, and the suggestion was made that maybe he was trying to show everyone how rich he was. I'm sure he enjoyed this unintended and awkward embarrassment, because if someone laughed or smiled as a result, then Andy was happy. It was a joy to be around Andy. Another incident I recall involved Andy Jr. more than his father, although both were there. I was trying to change a flat tire on my old Honda CRV bought no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get the tire off. I called Andy for help, so Andy and Andy Jr. drove over. Andy Jr. and I struggled for over an hour but couldn't get that tire off the vehicle. Finally, Andy Sr. called Steve Barsigian for help. Steve came over, took one look at the tire, got a sledge hammer, gave the tire a tap, and the tire fell off. Needless to say, Andy Jr. and I felt ridiculous. As Andy Sr and Jr drove away, Andy Jr. leaned out the window and said, "Next time call Bill Rentz." And who could forget Andy's ancient pick up truck. The poor mechanic who would pass the truck for inspection begged Andy, "Please don't bring it here any more. I don't want to lose my license."

No one likes to be in the company of someone who is miserable and a complainer. Andy's joy was infectious, and in one way or another this man whom I call a servant of God has touched all of us. To say that Andy loved the Lord and the Church is an understatement. He had a deep fondness for the Lord, and faithfully attended services and shared his time, treasure and talents to the utmost in a multitude of ways. If anything was needed, he was always there, ready, willing and able, as long as his human body had the strength and ability. Andy served on the parish council for 56 years, and was chairman of St. Basil's Cemetery Committee for 50 years. One can still see the original first maps of our cemetery, all in Andy's handwriting. Andy wanted only happiness and good things for others, and he understood well that true happiness and peace could only be found in the church. Andy was part of that original group of parishioners who would trek to Otego on a regular basis to help the nuns build their monastery, so we see the sisters here today to honor and pray for Andy. In fact, there probably wasn't anything at St. Basil's that Andy didn't participate in and help with in any way that he could. A month ago, June 6, in 1944 our military embarked on what is infamously remembered as D-Day. Andy served honorably and faithfully in the US Navy in WWII, and was a member of Maplewood VFW 1615. Andy loved his country and flag, and was a proud American. To his country Andy also gave in abundance of his time, treasure, and talents.

Andy was also a gifted teacher, and he loved children. I have heard from many of his former students at the Maplewood School, many who are parishioners of St. Basil's, of how much they loved having Andy as a teacher, and the captivating stories that he shared with his students. Andy always had a kind heart, and tried to help any one in any way. He himself told me about a student that he had who wanted to be a priest. And the boy was embarrassed and ashamed to share this with others. Andy encouraged the boy, and told him what a great calling and honor to serve the church as a priest, and that he shouldn't feel embarrassed. Likewise, the boys in the Coxsackie Reformatory also used to love Andy's stories, all of his students always asking, "Mr. Tarbay, please tell us another story." How many times I saw him slip some money to a young child whenever he saw one in church. My own granddaughter was once one of the recipients of his loving generosity. When I was awarded the jeweled cross, Vladika asked me if I had a cross. I said no. Vladika said, "We'll see what we can do, not to worry about it." Word was relayed to some of the parishioners that I needed a cross. I'm told that when Andy was approached, he simply asked, "How much?"

If I were to write Andy's epitaph, besides that "He always had a joke for everyone," I would add the words from St. Paul, written near the end of his life in Romans, Chapter 8, "I am convinced that nothing can separate us from the love of God; neither death nor life; neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers; neither things present, neither the world above nor the world below. There is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord." I know that Andy loved his wife Julia as much, and his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. To you I humbly offer on behalf of St. Basil's our deepest sympathy, and I also offer thanks to the Lord on behalf of us all for the gift that was Andy Tarbay and the time we were blessed to have with him. His remembrance and his imprint will not fade away. Our love for him will grow because he loved our Lord and served Him.

From my first day at St. Basil's, Andy used to rate my sermons. I can hear him saying right now, "I give you a five." Then he chuckles and adds, "No, I'm just kidding. You get a ten." May the Lord, my brother and faithful servant of Christ, give you a hundred, may you have your reward with the saints in the Kingdom of Heaven, and may your memory be eternal.