

## **SERMON at the funeral of Leonard Madcharo, December 4, 2018**

I would like to offer my sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Leonard Madcharo. I did not have the privilege of personally knowing Leonard. Last night when I read his obituary, it struck me that he and his wife Margaret had nine children. Years ago it was common to have large families. Today it is a rarity. The Old Testament Hebrews considered it a great blessing from God to have children, especially many children. Leonard and Margaret were truly blessed. This is the first thing that I noticed. The second thing that I noticed was that Leonard served honorably in the US Air Force. I can't tell you how much I love and honor our veterans, and how grateful I am to them for the freedom that I enjoy in our beloved country. Our veterans are our heroes and they are America's best, and Leonard was part of that proud band of brothers and sisters who have served our country. For this I salute and thank Leonard. Yes, Leonard has a large family. No doubt all of you and Leonard's six grandchildren and their spouses, as well his nieces and nephews share many memories of Leonard. You will always have these wonderful memories to comfort you and give you solace, keeping Leonard's memory alive in your hearts. When a loved one has passed, Christians have much more than just the memory of a loved one to comfort them. Christians have the hope and faith in the Resurrection. We believe that through our Lord Jesus Christ, salvation and eternal life has been gifted to mankind, to anyone who believes in our Savior as Lord and God. One of my favorite passages from the New Testament was when our savior said, "I did not come to judge the world, but to save it." The faith of Leonard and what was in Leonard's heart is known only unto Leonard and to God. Leonard has come home to the church of his family, St. Basil's Russian Orthodox Church. The roots of Leonard's family is in the Orthodox faith. All of us face the eternal questions of mankind: where did we come from, what is the purpose and meaning of life, and is there a life beyond the grave. In life all of us make our choices, what to believe in and what not to believe in, and we all choose what to do with the precious moments of this gift of human life. We are all vulnerable to time, and I can't emphasize enough how precious and valuable that time is and how easily we can lose it. Life runs its course swiftly, and ultimately we will all have to face the question of death: how to understand it, and how to deal with it. First it may be the death of a loved one, ultimately it will be our own death. From this no man or woman can escape, no matter what we choose to believe, and matter how we choose to live our lives. Another favorite passage of mine from Holy Scripture is that God is love. Having a large family and the love of family hood is a great and wonderful joy. However, even greater than this is the love and joy of faith in God. During Christ's ministry on the earth, many people would not waste their time to come and see Him or to hear Him, and yet the few who did had lifted from them insurmountable problems of fear, anxiety, pain, agony, hunger, thirst, sickness and sin. Those people took their time to come and to see the Lord. They took time to hear Him and they took time to reflect upon Him. When our Savior rose from the dead and sent us the Spirit of God, the human race received comfort, hope and fulfillment that goes beyond the pleasures of earthly and human life. It is my hope and prayer, dear brothers and sisters, that Leonard found faith in his heart with our Lord. Let us pray that Leonard will now find rest, peace and tranquility with our Lord, where, as we pray, there is no longer any sickness, sorrow or suffering, but life everlasting. May Leonard's memory be eternal and may he find eternal joy and salvation in the Kingdom of heaven. Amen.