

# Sermons at Saint Mark's

The Right Rev. Sanford Hampton

Funeral for The Right Rev. Robert Hume Cochrane, 6<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Olympia May 29, 2010

Isaiah 25:6-9; Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39; John 14:1-6

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## The Great Christian Hope

Holy God. We give thanks this day for the life and ministry of your servant, Robert.

Comfort us who mourn his death, especially Terry, Michael, Stephen and other members of his family.

Fill our hearts with courage, confidence and the knowledge that he rests in your loving arms and that you are doing greater things for him than we could either ask or imagine.

And this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First, I wish to express my gratitude to Terry, Michael and Steven Cochrane for inviting me to serve as the homilist at this funeral service for my former "boss" from Salt Lake City days. I really began my Ordained ministry as Bob Cochrane's Assistant, from who I learned much, and I can assure you this is an honor and a privilege.

Although I am the one listed as homilist in The Service Order, Bob Cochrane is the real homilist this afternoon. He left specific instructions that "My body, in a coffin, shall be present in the church during the burial service. This is to remind all present that I am truly dead and that they are there, not primarily for a memorial service, but to share in the Christian disposition of that which was once the temple of the Holy Spirit." For the Homilist, Bob instructed that "The primary emphasis of the homily shall be the Christian hope of resurrection and eternal life in Christ." As many of you

know, Bob Cochrane was an excellent teacher of The Faith and he fulfills that calling in this, his final service.

The themes of "Christian hope of resurrection and eternal life in Christ" are well underscored and proclaimed in the readings Bob selected for this service. "Isaiah" offers a poetic vision of Israel's future salvation, which Christians have reinterpreted in the light of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, "...death is swallowed up forever...tears are wiped away," and future life with God is assured. In Romans 8, a passage, among others that Bob and Terry's son, Michael, read to him in the closing hours of his life, the Good News is that none of the earthly circumstances and sufferings we experience can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. And in the most frequently used Gospel reading at Episcopal funerals, the hope and promise of larger life with God is held out for us, all because Jesus has gone before to prepare a place for us. Bob Cochrane believed this. Bob Cochrane taught this. Bob Cochrane strove to live into this.

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, observed, in one of his books, that there are three principal ministries of a Bishop: to be a pastor, to be a teacher and to be a leader of the church in mission (this last being the most neglected, suggests Carey). I've mentioned Bob Cochrane's heart for teaching. Since his death, some have

come forward with poignant examples of his pastoral care, especially women whose ordinations he initially opposed. Judith McDaniel, currently Professor of Homiletics at Virginia Seminary wrote, Bishop Cochrane said (paraphrasing), "The Church has decided and I will comply with the decision." Judith continued, "He knew when to accept the will of the Spirit at work. He not only ordained me but supported me throughout my ministry. I trusted him. He was there for me."

Bob also lived into the hope of resurrection and eternal life in Christ through his unselfish commitment to mission. Illustratively, while serving as Rector of All Saints', Salt Lake City, he led in initiating a new congregation in South Salt Lake where I was called as Vicar. He asked 12-15 highly committed families to help establish this new mission of St. James' along with their not insignificant financial offerings (a huge sacrifice as any parish priest or Vestry would acknowledge). As Bishop of Olympia he encouraged the planting of 12 new congregations. And in his time both as Rector and Bishop, he nurtured the vocations of any number of folks towards ordination, 5 alone from my brief time with him: Ed Tourangeau, Lincoln Ure, Thom Jensen, Bryan Jones and Shannon Leach now serving in various parts of The Episcopal Church. Bob gave more than lip service to the "Great Commission", "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..."

In short, Bob Cochrane believed, taught and proclaimed "...by word and example..." the hope of the resurrection and eternal life and he would invite us, Beloved Sisters and Brothers, to do the same.

I can imagine Robert Hume Cochrane being welcomed into that larger life with God by the Lord Jesus he loved and served with the words from the "Parable of the Talents": "Well done good and faithful servant.....enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:23).

But the last words of this homily belong to Bob as quoted from his own instructions:

"God bless you all. I look forward to being with you again in the Paradise of the Lord."