

Last week Father Ciya had a funeral Mass for Delores Carbone. Afterwards, he told me about the funeral, and what he had experienced. Delores had pre-arranged her funeral arrangements with White's Funeral Home in 2007. She left a letter for whatever priest would be celebrating her funeral Mass. Father Ciya was so very moved by this letter that he read it on her behalf at the funeral Mass he celebrated for her. When he showed it me, I was equally touched by the beautiful spirit of this woman, by her love for Jesus Christ and by caring for so many people. It was a true witness of what it means to be a follower of Jesus and it challenged me in my own Christian living.

Delores was correct in saying she would most likely outlive her relatives and friends since very few people attended the funeral Mass. I think of the words that are on the grave of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery: *Here rest in honored glory a soldier known only to God.* We can say about that she is now known not only to God but now in death to all of us. May she rest in the loving arms of Jesus. Father Pat

Letter from Dolores Carbone written Sept 29, 2008 Addressed to the Celebrant of her Funeral Mass

*Father, in an effort to personalize my funeral mass, I should like to tell you a little about myself. Have been a member of St. Martin's for twelve years as of the above date. Was a Eucharistic Minister going to the homebound and New Island Hospital (now St. Joseph's) in the telemetry ward every Friday, my assigned day. I was a catechist teaching the third and sixth grades for six years and then LaSalle took over and the children were transferred to St. Kilian.*

*I was also a co-facilitator in the bereavement and consolation ministry for people who had lost their spouse. It was also part of my duties to visit many funeral homes in the area such as Dalton, Wagner, White's etc to help the bereaved in picking out the music and the readings from the Old and New Testaments. I also attended the funeral mass of each of the respective families with whom I met and handed out the programs for the mass.*

*At the request of the late Deacon Frank Carrillo who was in charge of the bereavement and consolation ministry, I counselled people on a one-on-one basis. This was most rewarding to me and especially so when I brought some people back to the church because, as they told me, I loved Jesus so much. The winning of the lottery could not have made my heart jump for joy and rejoice as at those special times. And I said, "thank you Jesus. I couldn't have done it without you."*

*Last, but far from least, I was a member of the choir for many years, and I absolutely loved it especially when I was told that "when you sing, you pray twice." I was a member of the alto group, and I loved singing the harmony.*

*Father, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Jesus has always been the constant in my life. I buried two husbands and a wonderful gentleman friend, all of whom died of cancer, an inoperable brain tumor and an aneurysm, respectively. I turned to Jesus for comfort, compassion and understanding. HE gave me so much more, including the strength I could not have gone on living without. Since I lived to bury almost all of my family, and couldn't accept that, I was happy to be able to make Jesus my family. And HE'S my greatest Father, Protector and Friend.*

*I now go to meet Jesus personally – to talk to Him, love Him, touch Him, thank Him and live in HIS kingdom with Him forever. Please tell everyone not to be sad; my life isn't over, just changed. And we'll all meet again at their journey's end.*

*Father, thank you for your indulgence in reading this missive. Gratefully,  
Dolores Carbone*