

A Prayer for my Dear Brother Warren

I will conclude this with a Prayer for my dearest brother Warren, but first, I'd like to bear witness of his inherent goodness, and what a dear and good brother he was during my growing up years, 9 years his junior; the brilliant young man doing his very best to provide for his young wife, 3 daughters and his son; his very successful career; civic and philanthropic efforts and even through the troubled years.

If I was asked to name a song which seemed to transcend the years of his life, I would have to say it would be a song he would repeatedly love to play on his old guitar and sing for as long as I can remember. It is called, "I'd Rather Have Jesus," and I'm sure most who knew him well have heard him sing it more than once, and often with tear filled eyes.

I remember the wonderful brother "Warren" who never intentionally did anything to hurt me and who was the best older brother a kid like me could have ever wanted. Having Warren as my older brother was part of the blessing of a happy childhood growing up on the picturesque farm with its pretty barn and stalwartly built farmhouse at 2901 Spencerville Road in Burtonsville, Maryland which our Dad built for Mom in the mid 1920's.

A protector, a friend who taught me to whistle and bait a fishing hook. An individual who taught by example to have the courage to risk competition, completely startling our then-sleepy little town by appearing "Live" from New York on "Ted Mack's Original Amature Hour," the '50's equivalent of today's "American Idol." We all marveled to watch Warren's high energy Harmonica Act on the little black and white TV.

Those who remember Warren, or "Smiley" as he was often introduced on stage or TV, still talk about how he would keep the little miniature harmonica hidden in his mouth until near the end of the act where he would hold the big harmonica up in the air while playing the tiny one with no hands, always bringing applause to that finale ending sometimes tacked onto his act.

Warren's musical talents were also displayed on the old Don Owens TV Jamboree program over Washington's Channel 5 TV in the 50's where he often performed and became friends with Jimmy Dean and others who were just getting their start there on the local live TV program.

A mentor who thought I would make a good salesman and used to take me on his John Sexton Foods Corporation route, proudly introducing me to his restaurant and institutional customers when I was in my late teens. I wish I had tried harder to learn those skills which you, dear brother Warren, tried to impart to me and had so finely honed, but instead I followed my stronger aptitude toward the trades and later into career related technical writing.

An example of implementing hard work toward a goal overseeing salesmen in six states for Milani Foods, then a division of Alberto Culver Corporation. Still, dear brother Warren, you weren't about money. There was a deeper spiritual side to you, though it didn't fit the mold many would like to have formed for you.

I remember when you would make sales calls to Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital or the food services of your nursing home clients, often the rest of the sales day would be set aside and supplanted when the drummer to whom you marched would call for you to put on an impromptu show for patients for no other reason than you wanting to comfort those in suffering. Folks who were suffering seemed to always pull at your heart strings, and dear brother, what a big and generous heart was yours! Did your empathy somehow come from inwardly sensing the years of your own suffering which would increasingly be your lot in life? There are so many mysteries here in this transitory existence which we call "life."

An individual involved in the Young Republican's Club and whose hard work earned him the lifelong honorary title within the Jaycees of "Admiral of the Chesapeake," an award he was always so very proud to have attained.

I hope to see you again, dear brother Warren, for to spend eternity hearing you play the harmonica and to especially hear you playing your old guitar while singing "I'd Rather Have Jesus" would add a special touch to heaven which no other earthly mortal could provide for me there. I pray that Our Lord has forever banished those unseen forces which sought to destroy you. I pray that your own prayer of that often sung old song you loved so much, that you "really would" indeed, "Rather Have Jesus," will find fulfillment through the power of His resurrection in the Beatific Vision, where those whom He has purchased with His own Blood have every stain washed away; Where we can at last attain to that purity of heart where we are in unity, and One with our Creator God.

Yes Warren, even through the unquieted mind which increasingly crippled your life, and through that beautiful and deeply resonant voice which you played like a fine instrument, though clouded by smoke and alcohol, I believe God knew and heard the sincerity with which you would sing it with tear filled eyes which also moistened mine, "I'd Rather Have Jesus." You filled it with heartfelt meaning like none other I've ever heard sing it, that "I'd Rather Have Jesus." I know and bear witness that you were a good and true brother, and I know that, had you not been hampered, that you really "would have" "Rather had Jesus" in all of His purity of a virtuous life, than the havoc and destruction increasingly wreaked upon you by the demons whom you so valiantly fought against as best you could.

"He came unto his own and his own received Him not, but to as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the Sons of God." He came to save sinners, and I know that just as we used to sing, "Jesus Loves Me" in Sunday School, so He loves you, dear brother Warren. I would join my prayer with the prayer of that song. I would pray that the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, Mary most Holy, Queen of Angels and Saints will remind her Son Jesus to be sure to answer that prayer so that absent now of all shadows of darkness, that you may at last, cleansed by His Blood and eventually purged from the impurity of this life, attain to His Presence; for indeed I know that all along the way, if the purity of your intentions had not been thwarted by the cruel and unseen forces of darkness, that you'd "Rather Have Jesus" and be in His Presence for all Eternity.

As I typed this, I was reminded of an ancient Catholic Prayer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2WMhaogDsI>

In the Latin, the prayer which is part of the ancient Funeral Mass is entitled, "In Paradisum" and in the English translation it reads;

**"May the angels lead you into paradise:
May the martyrs receive you at your coming,
And lead you into the holy city, Jerusalem.
May the choir of angels receive you,
And with Lazarus, who once was poor,
May you have everlasting rest." --**

Traditional Catholic Funeral Prayer

Closing in faith that on that distant shore, together we will again be able to sing, "I'd Rather Have Jesus" in that place where all doubt and hurt is wiped away and we can be in His presence for all of eternity. A place reserved solely for those who would "Rather Have Jesus than anything this world affords today."

Sincerely,

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