
Words for Ian Henderson

**A homily for the funeral of Ian Henderson
by the Very Rev. Sam Candler**

A lot of people see church as the place where the people go who have it all together, where churchgoers get all dressed up, and they put on their smiles, and they look so accomplished and successful and happy.

For those of us who actually get to know people at church, however, we know it's different.

Church is where broken people go. It is where happiness happens, for sure, but it is also where unhappiness happens. Disappointments, failures, even sins. They all show up here.

We gather today to acknowledge some brokenness. We remember a man who could be happy and who could be sad. Who could be proud, and who could be shamed. We gather today to remember Ian Henderson, who could be so gentle and compassionate and witty and fun. Skilled and athletic, he was a man whom we could respect.

Some of us know, most of us can never know, what Ian carried around inside him, what burdens he bore. We know he bore a lot of them. And his family bore those burdens, too. Blessings to you: Stephanie, Ian, Clare, George, blessings to all of you. Thank you for caring. In the name of life, thank you for caring in the best ways you could. That care and that love do prevail.

Finally, we were pained to learn that Ian could not bear them any longer. It is sad.

But we also acknowledge today something greater even than the burdens and pain we carry. We acknowledge a powerful and merciful God. We trust today that God certainly knew the frustration and pain that Ian carried. And we trust today that God has more mercy than Ian had pain.

In the midst of brokenness, God's mercy is greater.

Today, we thank God for the good times. The bad times, we also turn over to the mercy of God. The disappointment, the sadness, the brokenness, we turn over to a merciful God.

Someone once said, "Love is not a victory march. It's a cold and it's a broken hallelujah." Today, we will say, "All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song, 'Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.'"

It is a courageous Alleluia. We say it even though we know things went wrong. Our Alleluia is not for the things that went wrong. Our Alleluia is for the mercy of God, who receives Ian with love, and who receives every single one of us, with love.

Today, we let go. Let go of the disappointments and the pain and the burden. We turn brokenness over to God. We turn broken haloes over to God, whose love is ever stronger, whose love holds us together in a new way.

AMEN.