

IN CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF
CHARLES WENDELL COLSON

OCTOBER 16, 1931 – APRIL 21, 2012



WEDNESDAY, THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF MAY IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWELVE
AT TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF SAINT PETER & SAINT PAUL
IN THE CITY & DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

“I had surely known the heights and depths of life: from power, wealth, prestige, and an office next to the president of the United States to the confining walls of a dreary prison. But along the way I had made the most important discovery anyone can make.

“That came about on a hot, sultry night in August, 1973. As the Watergate scandal was rocking the Nixon presidency and the nation, I—proud and self-assured on the outside, fearful and trembling within—visited with a close friend, Tom Phillips, at his home.

“Phillips was a successful business executive and client who, I had learned, had had some kind of religious experience. That evening Tom told me of his encounter with Jesus Christ, how his life had been dramatically changed. I listened intently. I had never heard anyone talk this way. Though something stirred within me, I kept my emotions in check, too proud to let him know how I felt inside.

“I left my friend that night, promising only to read a little book which he gave me, *Mere Christianity*. But in his driveway that night, the dam burst. I could not drive the car; I was crying too hard, calling out to God with the first honest prayer of my life. I sat there alone for a long time—but not alone at all.

“From that day on, nothing about my life has been the same. It can never be again. I have given my life to Jesus Christ.”



EASTER 1980, “As I sat on the platform, waiting my turn at the pulpit, my mind began to drift back in time...to scholarships and honors earned, cases argued and won, great decisions made from lofty government offices. My life had been the great American dream fulfilled.

“But all at once I realized that it was not my success God had used to enable me to help those in this prison, or in hundreds of others just like it. My life of success was not what made this morning so glorious—all my achievements meant nothing in God’s economy.

“No, the real legacy of my life was my biggest failure—that I was an ex-convict. My greatest humiliation—being sent to prison—was the beginning of God’s greatest use of my life; He chose the one thing in which I could not glory for His glory.

“Confronted with this staggering truth, I discovered in those few moments in the prison chapel that my world was turned upside down. I understood with a jolt that I had been looking at life backward. But now I could see: Only when I lost everything I thought made Chuck Colson a great guy had I found the true self God intended me to be and the true purpose of my life.

“It is not what we do that matters, but what a sovereign God chooses to do through us. God doesn’t want our success; He wants us. He doesn’t demand our achievements; He demands our obedience. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of paradox, where through the ugly defeat of a cross, a holy God is utterly glorified. Victory comes through defeat; healing through brokenness; finding self through losing self.”

Charles W. Colson, *Loving God*

THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

CARILLON PRELUDE

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide
Sheep May Safely Graze
My Shepherd will supply my need
Laudate Dominum
Passacaglia on "Amazing Grace"
Memorial Chimes

Eventide; arr. Leen 't Hart (1920–1992)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750); arr. Theophil Rusterholz (1907–2001)
Resignation; arr. Edward M. Nassor (b. 1957)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791); arr. Bernard Winsemius (b. 1945)
Loyd Lott (b. 1944)
Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Choral, from Deuxième Symphonie, Op. 20
O Welt, ich muss dich lassen
Master Tallis's Testament
Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten, BWV 668a
Andante sostenuto, from Symphonie gothique, Op. 70

Louis Vierne (1870–1937)
Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)
Herbert Howells (1892–1983)
J.S. Bach
Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937)

ENTRANCE OF THE FAMILY

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

J.S. Bach

All stand at the tolling of the Bourdon bell.

ANTHEM IN PROCESSION

The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord;
he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;
and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

I know that my Redeemer liveth,
and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;
and though this body be destroyed, yet shall I see God;
whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold,
and not as a stranger.

For none of us liveth to himself,
and no man dieth to himself.
For if we live, we live unto the Lord;
and if we die, we die unto the Lord.
Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;
even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.

WELCOME

The Reverend Dr. Francis H. Wade

HYMN*O for a thousand tongues to sing**Azmon*

1 O for a thou - sand tongues to sing my dear Re - deem - er's praise,
 2 My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, as - sist me to pro - claim
 3 Je - sus! the Name that charms our fears and bids our sor - rows cease;
 4 He speaks; and, lis - tening to his voice, new life the dead re - ceive,
 5 Hear him, ye deaf; ye voice - less ones, your loos - ened tongues em - ploy;

1 the glo - ries of my God and King, the tri - umphs of his grace!
 2 and spread through all the earth a - broad the hon - ors of thy Name.
 3 'tis mu - sic in the sin - ner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace.
 4 the mourn - ful bro - ken hearts re - joice, the hum - ble poor be - lieve.
 5 ye blind, be - hold, your Sa - vior comes; and leap, ye lame, for joy!

6 Glory to God and praise and love
 be now and ever given
 by saints below and saints above,
 the Church in earth and heaven.

THE COLLECT FOR BURIAL*Officiant* The Lord be with you.*People* **And with thy spirit.***Officiant* Let us pray.

O God, whose mercies cannot be numbered: Accept our prayers on behalf of thy servant Charles, and grant him an entrance into the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of thy saints; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE COLLECT FOR THOSE WHO MOURN

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding, deal graciously with Charles' family and friends in their grief, and with prisoners around the world. Surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The people are seated.***THE FIRST READING***Read by Christian Billings Colson*

Philippians 1:21-23

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians written from a jail cell.

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

Reader The Word of the Lord.*People* **Thanks be to God.**

MUSICAL REFLECTION*Largo, from Xerxes**Performed by Rebecca Smith, harp*

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

TRIBUTE

Emily Colson

THE SECOND READING*Read by Stephanie Casper Colson*

Isaiah 61:1–3

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

Reader The Word of the Lord.*People* **Thanks be to God.****TRIBUTE**

Chaplain Danny Croce

People often ask what my legacy will be. The answer is simple. Apart from my family, it will be the living monuments of God's grace, the people who have experienced a complete new life, and I've been privileged to be a part of. At the top of the legacy list will be Danny. He and I have a special kinship, and as I watch him grow in Christ, I rejoice, and I feel pride—the right kind of pride, that is. This is the man whom God anointed to do great things, to be a witness to our culture, to reach out to the poorest of the poor, and to give hope—new hope, indeed—to the 1 out of 32 Americans today who are either in prison or on probation. What's the answer to the staggering prison problem in America? More Danny Croces.

*Chuck Colson***ANTHEM***The King of Love My Shepherd Is**Sung by the Cathedral Choir*

arr. Michael McCarthy (b. 1966)

The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
and he is mine for ever.

Where streams of living water flow,
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow,
with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and oh, what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never:
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house for ever.

THE THIRD READING*Read by Charles Christian Colson and Caroline Colson Usry*

Philippians 3:7–21

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained. Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

TRIBUTE

The Honorable Albert H. Quie

MUSICAL REFLECTION*Performed by Wintley Phipps**Amazing grace!**New Britain***THE HOLY GOSPEL***Proclaimed by the Reverend Robert A. Sirico*

Matthew 25:34–45

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People **Glory be to thee, O Christ.**

Jesus said, “Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise be to thee, O Christ.**

The people are seated at the invitation of the homilist.

THE HOMILY

The Reverend Dr. Timothy George

MUSICAL REFLECTION*Performed by Wintley Phipps**It Is Well with My Soul*

The people stand.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Said by all.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

The Reverend Hayes Wicker

Intercessor For our brother Charles, let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ who said, "I am Resurrection and I am Life."

Lord, you consoled Martha and Mary in their distress; draw near to us who mourn for Charles, and dry the tears of those who weep.

People **Hear us, Lord.**

Intercessor You wept at the grave of Lazarus, your friend; comfort us in our sorrow.

People **Hear us, Lord.**

Intercessor You raised the dead to life; give to our brother eternal life.

People **Hear us, Lord.**

Intercessor You promised paradise to the thief who repented; bring our brother to the joys of heaven.

People **Hear us, Lord.**

Intercessor Our brother was washed in Baptism and anointed with the Holy Spirit; give him fellowship with all your saints.

People **Hear us, Lord.**

Intercessor He was nourished with your Body and Blood; grant him a place at the table in your heavenly kingdom.

People **Hear us, Lord.**

Intercessor Comfort us in our sorrows at the death of our brother; let our faith be our consolation, and eternal life our hope.

Silence is kept.

Officiant Grant us, with all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, to have our consummation and bliss in thy eternal and everlasting glory, and, with all thy saints, to receive the crown of life which thou dost promise to all who share in the victory of thy Son Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

People **Amen.**

HYMN

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide

Eventide

1 A - bide with me: fast falls the e - ven - tide;
 2 I need thy pres - ence ev - ery pass - ing hour;
 3 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
 4 Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes;

the dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide:
 what but thy grace can foil the tempt - er's power?
 ills have no weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness.
 shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;

when o - ther help - ers fail and com - forts flee,
 Who, like thy - self, my guide and stay can be?
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?
 heaven's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain sha - dows flee;

help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.
 Through cloud and sun - shine, Lord, a - bide with me.
 I tri - umph still, if thou a - bide with me.
 in life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me.

THE COMMENDATION

Bishop Budde

Officiant Give rest, O Christ, to thy servant with thy saints,
People where sorrow and pain are no more,
 neither sighing, but life everlasting.

Officiant Thou only art immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and unto earth shall we return. For so thou didst ordain when thou createdst me, saying, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." All we go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

People **Give rest, O Christ, to thy servant with thy saints,
where sorrow and pain are no more,
neither sighing, but life everlasting.**

Officiant Into thy hands, O merciful Savior, we commend thy servant Charles. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech thee, a sheep of thine own fold, a lamb of thine own flock, a sinner of thine own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of thy mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

People **Amen.**

CHORAL BENEDICTION

Sung by the Cathedral Choir

The Lord bless you and keep you

John Rutter (b. 1945)

The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

Numbers 6:24

THE DISMISSAL

Officiant Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia!

People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!**

CLOSING HYMN

Great is thy faithfulness

Faithfulness

Great is thy faith-ful-ness, O God my Fa-ther,
Sum-mer and win-ter, and spring-time and har-vest,
Par-don for sin and a peace that en-dur-eth,
There is no shad-ow of turn-ing with thee;
Sun, moon, and stars in their cours-es a-bove,
Thine own dear pres-ence to cheer and to guide;
Thou chang-est not, thy com-pas-sions, they fail not,
Join with all na-ture in man-i-fold wit-ness,
Strength for to-day and bright hope for to-mor-row,
As thou hast been thou for-ev-er wilt be.
To thy great faith-ful-ness, mer-cy and love.
Bless-ings all mine, with ten thou-sand be-side!
Great is thy faith-ful-ness! Great is thy faith-ful-ness!
Morn-ing by morn-ing new mer-cies I see;
All I have need-ed thy hand hath pro-vid-ed,
Great is thy faith-ful-ness, Lord un-to me!

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Grand Choeur Dialogué

Eugène Gigout (1844–1925)

*Following the service, a reception for Colson family and friends will occur at the campus of
Prison Fellowship Ministries and the Colson Center at
44180 Riverside Parkway
Lansdowne, VA 20176
from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm*

*Immediately following the service, the Washington Ringing Society
will attempt a quarter-peal in celebration of the life of
Charles Wendell Colson.*

OFFICIANTS

The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington

The Reverend Dr. Francis H. Wade
Interim Dean, Washington National Cathedral

READERS

Mr. Christian Billings Colson
Son

Ms. Stephanie Casper Colson
Granddaughter

Mr. Charles Christian Colson
Grandson

Mrs. Caroline Colson Usry
Granddaughter

TRIBUTES

Ms. Emily Colson
Daughter and Author, Dancing with Max

Mr. Danny Croce
Founder and Prison chaplain, New Hope Correctional Ministry

The Honorable Albert H. Quie
Member, United States House of Representatives, 1958–1979
XXXV Governor of Minnesota, 1979–1983
Acting Chief Executive Officer, Prison Fellowship, 1988–1989

GOPELLER

The Reverend Robert A. Sirico
President, Acton Institute

HOMILIST

The Reverend Dr. Timothy George
Dean and Professor, Samford University, Beeson Divinity School
Chairman, Colson Center for Christian Worldview Board of Directors

INTERCESSOR

The Reverend Hayes Wicker
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Naples, Florida

MUSICIANS

Wintley Phipps, *bass*

Rebecca Smith, *harp*

The National Brass

Dennis Edelbrock, *trumpet* Matthew Niess, *trombone*
Woodrow English, *trumpet* Gus Mitchell, *trombone*

The Cathedral Choir

Canon Michael McCarthy
Director of Music, Washington National Cathedral

Dr. Edward M. Nassor
Carillonneur, Washington National Cathedral

Scott Dettra
Organist, Washington National Cathedral

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