

On behalf of myself and our staff here at Holy Family – and on behalf of all of us gathered to celebrate the life of Sadie, I wish to extend my sympathies first of all to Sadie’s five children.

So beginning with the number one son Anthony, down through the baby of the family Joe and the wonderful women in between, Annette, Ginny and Rosetta, our sympathies on the loss of your mother.

No matter how old we get or how independent we think we are, we always need the comfort and acceptance and love of our mothers.

There were many times in life your mother held you up and many times, especially since your father’s death when all of you held your mother up. Together, you were family – one of those things your mother valued very much.

And please hear the wisdom of the first reading directed to all you: kindness to parents will not be forgotten.

I think it is very noble that when it was obvious the end of your mother's life was near, you brought her to the place which meant so much to her, a place of refuge for all of you. You brought your mother home. And there, she died in peace.

To your spouses, to your children and grandchildren, I offer you our sympathy on the loss of your mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Since Sadie was a rock to all of you – a true matriarch of the family – I know each of you will miss her and mourn her in your own special way. May the strength of faith help you through this difficult time.

Basketball coach John Wooden, described by ESPN as the “greatest coach of the 20th century,” once had a player named Swen Nater at UCLA who wrote a poem about him.

The poem was entitled, “*First things First,*” and Nater said the inspiration for the poem came after several years of watching Coach Wooden live his life.

Here is the poem:

Give me family, faith and friends; they're all I'll ever need.

They're all I'll ever crave from crib to grave and all I'll bring with me above.

Give me family, faith, and friends – above prosperity – for wealth untold and fleeting gold do not appeal to me.

Give me family, faith, and friends, not notoriety. To have a name with worldly fame does not compare you see.

*Give me family, faith, and friends – these are my priorities.
And then I'll be well known among my own – and rich I'll surely
be.*

Family, faith and friends – these were the things that mattered most to Sadie – and that she built her life around.

Sadie's grand-daughter Gina captured Sadie's love of family when she said, "When any of her grandchildren or children needed anything, she was there to help instantly, without hesitation. When we were down, she would encourage us. She was protective of her family and would not let anyone to speak negatively of any one of us. She was always faithful and loving towards her family."

I understand that her daughters were very special to Sadie, but that the boys could do no wrong. As it should be with a mother, in my humble opinion.

Yes, like St. Paul, Sadie was gentle among you – as a nursing mother cares for her children, but lest we come to think Sadie was just a softie when it came to her children, she did know how to discipline them. Anthony admits that he thinks his mom broke more wooden spoons on them, than she ever did while cooking!

Close behind family was Sadie's value of friends – which for her, was just an extension of family.

Wherever she went, whether at work at the Betty Rose Corporation, the Italian Gardens or Jeannie's Restaurant, where Sadie admitted she did not quite care for the food, but loved the interaction, or if it were at dances or at Bocce, Sadie made friends and it was hard to forget her once you experienced her quick smile and her expression of humor.

Perhaps people knew what a faithful friend Sadie could be – because she always admonished others that if they had nothing nice to say about someone, then it's best to say nothing: and lived this principle in her life.

And underlying these rich relationships of family and friends in Sadie's life was her unwavering faith in the Lord. I mean think of losing your spouse when they are just 52 years old and continuing on in life with as much passion for life as did Sadie and it could only be faith that keeps you focused and moving on with such determination.

Give me family, faith and friends – they are my priority. But I feel compelled to add a fourth F for Sadie and that would be fun. She knew life was to be enjoyed and perhaps she knew that because of the losses in her life.

She loved to cook and tell other people how to cook. She loved to dance and hardly ever missed one at the Hyatt Hotel – although for some reason, she just did not feel like going on a July night in 1981 – the night of the walkway collapse. . . certainly God was watching over her.

Sadie loved to attend the school and sporting events of her grandchildren and did her best to keep up on the latest trends. She was content with what she had and it was the littlest things that made her happy.

And she wanted everyone else to be happy too. That's why she would cut little motivating stories and saying out of the paper and post them on the refrigerator. It's why she was quick to forgive, quick to praise, and quick to encourage.

At the end of my meeting with the family on Saturday, someone said, “We had lots of good stuff to say about mom, because she was good stuff.”

And now, God has called Sadie to her eternal home where he simply says, “Come and rest. After a life filled with labors and burdens – come and rest.”

And so she does, reunited with her beloved Pete. Reunited with her mother and father, brothers and sisters and all who have gone before her. Now ready to begin the enjoyment of eternal life.