



## THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT

A few minutes after 10:00 O'clock in the morning of October 29, 2008, Tony Reyes – my friend and brother in Christ – passed on to his rest. Within the hour, Jec and I were in his hospital room to be with Eunice and Janice. For a while, we just spent our time hugging each other and weeping softly. It was very difficult for us to accept the reality that Tony was gone – that he was no longer in our world.

Just the night before, we were at his bedside to pray for him and to talk to him. His eyes were closed, but he would move his head every time we would call out his name. But somehow, we sensed that he was slowly beginning to slip away. Once more, we cried out to God for His intervention, believing that He had the power to heal the sick and resurrect the dead. He gave us peace and assured us that Tony's life was in His hands.

Death is unavoidable in our fallen world. Since Adam's sin, death has been part and parcel of human existence. Sooner or later, people have to face the bad news of a dreadful disease like cancer and leukemia. Sooner or later, everyone faces the sad news of the death of a loved one. King David once wrote, *"No one can live forever; all will die. No one can escape the power of the grave."* (Psalms 89:48)

Death is inevitable in this vale of tears we call home. So, there will always be funerals. We will continue to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Christians will weep, and must weep, when they lose someone to death. But Christians must also do something other than weep in despair. In the midst of mourning, they must trust Jesus.

Often, when we lose someone we love, our grief causes us to see nothing but darkness. The anguish of our loss engulfs our souls and we can't see beyond the gloom of sadness. And many would rather remain in the night of mourning than face the coming daylight without their loved one. They can't see the other side of midnight.

I believe that it's all right for us to feel the pain and the heartache caused by Tony's death because it leads us to trust God more. It's all right for us to mourn the darkness of the night because it leads us to long for the light of the coming dawn. There is a glorious day waiting for us on the other side of midnight! We can mourn with hope because of what God says to us about Tony in His Word.

**Tony is precious to God and He grieves his death with us.** *"The Lord's loved ones are precious to Him; it grieves Him when they die."* (Psalms 116:15 LB)

**Tony is with Jesus Christ now.** *"We know that while we live in this body, we are away from the Lord . . . We really want to be away from this body and be at home with the Lord."* (2 Cor. 5:6,8 NCV) *"For to me, living is for Christ, and dying is even better. Yet if I live, that means fruitful service for Christ. I really don't know which is better. I'm torn between two desires: Sometimes I want to live, and sometimes I long to go and be with Christ. That would be far better for me, but it is better for you that I live."* (Phil. 1:21-22 NLT)

**Tony will receive a new body in the Resurrection.** *"And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere."* (Phil. 3:20-21 NLT) *"For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died."* (1 Thes. 5:14 NLT)

**We will see Tony again in the Resurrection.** *"I can tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not rise to meet Him ahead of those who are in their graves. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with Him forever."* (1 Thes. 5:15-18 NLT)

**We will live forever with Tony in the New Earth.** *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . Now God's home is with men. He will live with them, and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain. All the old ways are gone."* (Rev. 21:1-4 NLT)

We can trust Jesus. He cares. He knows our sorrows. He feels our pain. He understands our despair. He experienced our anguish. He was like us. And He made this promise to us: *"I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die."* (John 11:25-26 NLT)