
Words for Sara Craig

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The Cathedral of St. Philip
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O that my words were written down!
O that they were inscribed in a book!

O that with an iron pen and with lead
The were engraved on a rock forever!

For I know that my Redeemer lives,
And that at the last he will stand upon the earth.
Job 19.23-25

"O that my words were written down!"

When I last saw Sara, like many of you last saw Sara, she was lying in that Hospice bed weak and yet ever so alert. I mentioned that one of the things I missed was her writing. She looked up at me and said, "Well, I'm still trying to get to that. We're looking at some software now that will transpose what I say into writing. I'll get back to that," she said.

"O that my words were written down." Surely all of you know that Sara was a writer. She wrote, it seems to everyone and about everything. At the Cathedral, I was fortunate enough to receive several of those epistles each year. Even more fortunately for us, she was mostly encouraging when she wrote about church matters -but not always so. I don't think anyone, even the Church, even God, got off easily from Sara Craig.

When Sara spoke, when Sara wrote, she spoke the truth; but it was a kind of truth that was at once whimsical and also cutting to the heart. She was sharp, and also kind. She was amazingly accurate, and almost always hopeful. In short, her words were refreshing -just as her presence always was. It was refreshing to be around Sara Craig, to hear the latest from Sara Craig.

As such, I daresay today that Sara Craig was a kind of modern prophet. "What did you come out to see?" Jesus once asked us about John the Baptist: "What did you come out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than prophet."

If a prophet is someone who speaks truth eloquently and passionately and believably, then Sara Craig was a prophet. If a prophet is someone who seeks the mind of God, and who truly cares for righteousness and justice, then Sara Craig was a prophet. If a prophet is someone who herself yearns for true judgment, then Sara Craig was prophet.

We all know that Sara's political leanings were strong, and we all know in which direction they bent. But I received letters from her during several different political administrations, and she could be equally admonishing for both republicans and democrats. In fact, I think she liked both republicans and democrats.

In fact, I know she liked both republicans and democrats! The former director of the CDC, where Sara worked years ago, in one of her many careers, told me that he once received the perfect desk plaque from Sara. On the plaque were inscribed these words:

"Live like a republican! Act like a democrat!"

She was not all locusts and wild honey. Sara loved the soft robes and good life. She loved art and travel. She almost talked my wife into taking her to the Tate Museum two years ago so she could finish up writing there.

"O that my words were written down." I imagine that this was Sara's prayer almost daily. She leaves behind many wonderful and beautiful words. But she also leaves behind the truth that we heard from the Book of Revelation this morning: "the home of God is among mortals." The dwelling of God is with people.

Sara Craig was a wizard with words, and she was also a wizard with God's people. She could speak well, because she also loved well. She touched people with liveliness and spark. Her feistiness was contagious. She knew how to speak the truth with love.

Whatever she said about me, for instance, I believed. One day she called me a beautiful poet and inspiring leader - and I believed her. But then she would also call me innocent and naïve, and I believed her then, too!

That's how she collected so many relationships and so many friends. She spoke the truth -the whole truth""but she did so with amazing grace and great humor. Who can forget her wise and deep laugh? She not only collected words, then; she also collected friends. Wherever she went, wherever she lived, the friends she made felt like they were her closest companions. That, too, was her gift. Those friends, too, --Us!-- are the words she leaves behind.

Sara died on Christmas Day. That is not a neutral day for Christians. And Sara was never neutral. Christmas is the Feast of the Incarnation; it is on Christmas that we celebrate "The word made flesh" in Jesus Christ our Lord.

But this year, we celebrate the word made flesh in another way. We gather today to acknowledge that the word was also made flesh in Sara Craig. In her, the word of grace and truth, the words of beauty and insight, became alive and inspiring.

The home of God is with mortals. The word is always being made flesh. Sara has stopped writing words with pen and paper and computer and software. But she has written deeply on our hearts and in her friends. That writing, that love, that word, has not died.

The word of God is made flesh today. In the sure and certain hope of the resurrection, we lift up Sara Craig today with the same grace and wisdom with which she lifted us up. I know that my Redeemer lives! The dwelling of God is with mortals.

AMEN

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip