

FROM THE VICAR GENERAL

ONLY JESUS | FATHER MICHAEL TIX

Finding hope in the Resurrection



Prior to the beginning of Lent, I celebrated the funeral of Jenny Wiederholt-Pine. Wiederholt-Pine was 44 years old, a wife and mother of

three who was actively involved with her kids, a successful businesswoman, and was recently elected to the local school board.

The news of Wiederholt-Pine's death from a heart issue sent shock waves through our community in ways that left people stunned and silent before something that can only be described as a mystery. It filled hearts with questions of "how" and "why?"

Wiederholt-Pine's visitation and funeral occurred on the coldest days of this calendar year, but people came out in amazing numbers despite the weather. On a day when the expected high temperature never rose above zero, more than 1,500 people passed through the doors of the Hastings funeral home for the visitation, with some waiting in line for at least two hours to greet Wiederholt-Pine's family. For the funeral, when the temperature was at 18 degrees below zero, more than 500 packed St. Joseph in Miesville to overflowing.

If there is any doubt about the difference one person can make in the lives of others, all you needed to do was look around that day. Wiederholt-Pine touched the lives of many and shared with them the goodness of God's

“Where was God to be found in the sadness of (Jenny) Wiederholt-Pine's death? God was found in the goodness of her life that was a blessing to many. God was found in the overwhelming community support for her family and one another in their time of loss. God continues to be found in our commitment — renewed at Easter in our baptismal promises — to live Jesus' way of love and make a positive difference in the lives of others around us as we together witness to the Resurrection for our world today.

love as a wife and mother, a friend and neighbor, as a soccer coach and competitive horseback rider, as well as an insurance agent who helped people find positive solutions for the good of all.

At the funeral, Wiederholt-Pine's high school-aged daughter, her eldest, shared stories of their special bond. Wiederholt-Pine's brother also spoke, sharing stories of how she always ran from one thing to the next without breaking a sweat, resulting in her coming to know seemingly by name every state trooper between her home of Miesville and Winona, where she graduated from college.

Wiederholt-Pine's brother told the story of how their dad was stopped one night driving from Winona to Miesville, and being told as he was handed a ticket by the state trooper, "Mr. Wiederholt, your daughter Jenny

drives faster than you!" The story filled the church with laughter, and for even a brief moment broke the tension of so sad a loss for everyone. While Wiederholt-Pine was always running, that day we were all reminded about the gift of time that God gives to any of us, and how we can use that gift to brighten the lives of others around us. In Wiederholt-Pine's words, "Kindness is free."

In our Lenten journey we now find ourselves at Holy Week. In these days we reflect on the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. While we celebrate these saving events during Holy Week, we remember that the paschal mystery continues among us. We see the paschal mystery in the life of Wiederholt-Pine and so many more.

Whether it be Wiederholt-Pine's death and those who suffer her loss, or others grieving losses, there are many

in our world who carry heavy crosses that are collectively connected to the cross of Christ. Holy Week calls us to see around us those experiencing passion and death. It might be the sick and suffering, the hungry and homeless, or the abused and forgotten of our world.

At the same time, faith calls us to never lose sight of hope in the Resurrection. Jesus' death brings life and the promise of eternal life. Much like the disciples at Jesus' death on the cross, people at the time of Wiederholt-Pine's death were filled with questions, including where God was to be found in their tears and sadness. One of the great Easter lessons for us is that the risen Christ wasn't always readily apparent to the disciples, but that didn't mean Jesus wasn't there. With the eyes of faith, people came to realize the presence of the risen Christ among them at unexpected times and in unexpected ways, and the same is true for us in our own journey of faith.

Where was God to be found in the sadness of Wiederholt-Pine's death? God was found in the goodness of her life that was a blessing to many. God was found in the overwhelming community support for her family and one another in their time of loss. God continues to be found in our commitment — renewed at Easter in our baptismal promises — to live Jesus' way of love and make a positive difference in the lives of others around us as we together witness to the Resurrection for our world today.