

Today, we gathered as God's family to mourn the loss of ordinary young girl, who lived a supernatural life. One question most everyone has--- is why did such a young girl, have to die so early. Some can even blame God as though God was at fault. But God is not at fault..No! Rather, God allows suffering and disease so that we draw close to Him to discover His deep and abiding love for us. We know how much God loves us, because laid down His life for us on the Cross. And He showed us the priceless value of suffering by what He Himself suffered for us. Jesus said, *"There is no greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."*

It's not God's fault Amy got cancer. So, whose fault is it? Sin, suffering and disease entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God by doing what the devil tempted them to do, when they committed original sin, which is passed down to us. So if we want to blame someone, we should blame the devil for tempting Adam and Eve and blame Adam and Eve for succumbing to Satan's temptations. God is not in some far distant place as though He doesn't care. God cares about us. God suffers with us because God loves us. If we just picture in our mind, Jesus the Good Shepherd, who goes out to find the lost sheep and holds the lamb to himself, then we can come to know who God really is. Despite original sin, our sins, and disease-- Jesus walks with us in our valley of tears. Jesus loves us so much--- and gives Himself to us--- especially in the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of love. He resides within our heart, through baptism and never leaves us alone. He wants us to turn to Him in our misery and our suffering. He wants to embrace us and give us peace.

Amy Sigle was born Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, 1992-- to Chris and Sharman Sigle-- two months premature. Just after her birth, she was airlifted to a hospital in Topeka and received an emergency baptism while at the hospital. As a premature baby, when it seemed as though Amy was going to die, her father prayed and asked Jesus if she could grow up so that he could get to know her, to have coffee with her to talk with her. God answered his prayers.

From the very beginning Amy would battle to live. Her life would become a great witness, not only to the people of Council Grove and Wilsey, but to all those, who will come to hear about her. There are times in which the Lord God for some unknown reason grants special graces to a particular soul to live a supernatural life, in an ordinary way, so as to be an example to all of us. Amy is one of those souls. It is my opinion, that though Amy died at the age of 17, she was able to attain a greater holiness than most people, who strive to be holy unto old age.

Her life is an example for all of us. It's easy to say about anyone that they were a nice person, and they were special. But Amy was more than nice, more than special. It is God's grace that caused her to live her ordinary life in a supernatural way.

At a very young age, she loved God. She and her sister, Jerre, wrote love letters to God and let the wind carry them away. In her innocence, she thought the wind would take her letters to God.

Amy loved God's creation and wanted to be park ranger. She had a pet opossum and pet raccoon and enjoyed looking at beautiful pictures of the mountains and sunsets. Perhaps, she saw God's handiwork in His creation.

When Amy heard that her cancer was terminal she never shed a tear. She always accepted God's will such that she told people, not to pray for a miracle, because she wanted to go to heaven. Throughout her life, she was constantly concerned about the needs of others, before her own needs. How many of us complain about the most mundane things. It's too hot or it's too cold or complain to others that we have a headache or that we are suffering from this or that. Not Amy. The entire time she endured her cancer, she never—not even once--- complained about her pain. Even if she was in intense pain, she never—not even once--- told others. But if you asked her if she was in pain, she would tell you that she was. Many times, I went to room 33 in the hospital and would have a conversation like this with Amy. I would say, *"Amy, are you in pain?"* and She would say, *"Yes."* I would say, *"Lots of pain?"* and she would say *"Yes."* I would say, *"Do you want me to push your morphine button?"* and she would say *"No."* She said she wanted to offer up her pain to Jesus to save souls. Even though her tumors literally broke through the skin in her side and on her back, Amy wanted to suffer for Jesus to save souls and she never complained about it. It's interesting that her confirmation saint, St. Catherine of Sienna, had an invisible wound in her side, until her death, which became visible, after her death.

The world sees suffering as a waste, and we try to flee suffering at all cost. Instant pleasures and freedom from pain is how we want to live.

However, the Catholic Church has the most beautiful teachings on the value of suffering. For us suffering is precious, it's beautiful, it's valuable because suffering is the way Jesus revealed His love for us, especially on the Cross. Suffering in itself, means little, unless it is united to the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross, and then our pain and suffering takes on new meaning, because the value of the sufferings of Jesus are infinite. We believe that we can offer up our suffering and give it to Jesus and by His grace and His redemptive act on the Cross, the suffering can save souls, who otherwise would be lost for all eternity.

As Jesus refused to drink the sponge on the Cross, Amy refused to quench her thirst with the sponge given to her at the hospital. As Jesus never once complained about His suffering on the Cross, Amy never once complained about her suffering while in the hospital. This is God's grace alive and active in the soul of an ordinary girl, who lived a supernatural life with Jesus.

St. Paul said, *"Brothers, I beg you through the mercy of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind..."* Amy offered her body as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, her spiritual worship.

Amy was not conformed to this worldly age. In our day and age school and community activities are constantly encroaching upon church, especially on Sunday and Wednesdays causing children to choose between God and school. Amy always chose God. She chose heaven. School and 4 H activities are good in themselves, but if they replace church, what kind of message are we giving to our children? Are we showing our children the ways of the world, or the way to heaven?

Amy's family is faith filled. The family has God as the center of their life. Their family is an example to the rest of us. Our faith is what will get us to heaven. Every Tuesday, the Sigle family gathers to pray the rosary together. The day before Amy died, her family gathered around her bed and prayed the rosary with her one last time. Before praying the Rosary, she received the Eucharist for the last time. Amy had a great devotion to the Eucharist. Even though she was weak and sick from her chemo, she would come to Mass and sit in the cry room and receive Jesus in the Eucharist there. Amy believed the Eucharist is no mere symbol, but rather the real and true presence of Jesus.

Amazingly, she told her father. *"Tomorrow, I will have no more pain and suffering"*. She told then told him, *"I will die tomorrow"*. Every night her father would pray a rosary with her. The day before she died, she told her father, *"This will be the last rosary we will pray together"*. The next day she told nurses, *"Today, I will die."* No one can know the day of their

death unless God himself reveals it to them. Amy was very close to the Lord Jesus, who revealed the day of her death to her.

Amy knew it was difficult for her family to see her suffer and she was concerned about causing them pain because of her suffering. She didn't want her mother to see her die and she told her mother, to go home. And not much after her mother left her room, Amy died.

One day, I intended to bring a relic of Mother Teresa to Amy's room to have her venerate it. After I got to Amy's room I happened to forget the relic and went back to my car to get it. In the meantime, Amy said, she felt someone touch her arm and wondered who it was, but didn't see anyone. It's interesting to note that I asked Mother Teresa to console Amy when I went to the car to get the relic.

While in the hospital patients and nurses reported seeing a woman dressed in white walk down the hall near Amy's room. Could it have been Mother Teresa, many believe it was.

Once I asked Amy, *"If you could tell the world something, what would she say?"* She did not hesitate to give her answer and said, *"To know Christ, to love Christ and to serve Christ."* Amy knew Christ. Amy loved Christ and Amy served Christ especially in her suffering.

On another occasion, I asked Amy what caused her the most pain. Here I was speaking about her physical pain. But do you know what she said? She said, *"When people take the name of Jesus in vain...this causes me the most pain."* She was more concerned about the pain

sin causes Jesus, than her own pain. Amy died on the feast of St. Bernadine of Sienna, one the greatest preachers of the Holy Name of Jesus!

Something that happened just after her death is quite remarkable. A relative of Amy's by the name of Carol Mould, was murdered 5 years ago in Butler County. The case was cold. Before Amy died, someone asked Amy to help them find the murderer when she gets to heaven. And the most remarkable thing happened. One hour after Amy died, a suspect was arrested. Some call this coincidence. Others see it as Amy's prayerful intercession in heaven.

The Catholic Church teaches that even though we die, because the dead are in the presence of God, they can pray for us and help us in our needs. The Lord God will grant us the graces we ask, through the intercession of the saints. We do not lose our connection with the deceased. Just as we pray for each other on earth, so those in heaven, can pray for us. Though all this is true, we should still pray for the soul of Amy, that is what she would want.

We are all very sad that Amy is no longer with us. But, we have the consolation of knowing, she lived her life with Jesus Christ, and so will live her life with Jesus in the next. We can keep Amy alive in our hearts if we do the best we can to live as she lived.

If Amy could be speak to us today, perhaps she would tell us to hold our heads high, to be more concerned about the needs of others, rather than our own, to not complain because of our sufferings, but rather offer them up to Jesus to save souls. She would tell us to put God first in our life, above everything else, to not conform ourselves to this age, but rather be

conformed to Christ. She would tell us to pray together as a family, and she would tell us to know Jesus, to love Jesus, and to serve Jesus, so that we may be with Jesus forever in heaven.

Amen.