

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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December 21, 2017

Mrs. Swallow Leach
2511 East 2nd Street Apt. 10, Bloomington
Indiana 47401 U.S.A.

Dear Swallow,

I write to express my sincerest and deepest sympathy to you for the sad event of the demise of our dear George Leach, your most beloved husband. The news came yesterday like a thunderbolt from the blues. However, despite my inclination to believe that the news is either not true or a mistaken information, the very fact of its coming from the parish office finally convinced me that I am dealing with a fact already officially established. Really, I couldn't but shed tears and I believe you know why. I have already said a Holy Mass (*ad nuntium mortis*) for the repose of his soul.

Swallow, the present pain is so difficult for me to manage. Certainly, for you this would be one cross, too many to bear. However, we must rest consoled by the fact that George is a very righteous man. Mark my word: "righteous man!" I say this with every amount of gravity and know no other way of expressing it. The book of Wisdom says: "the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God." And – pure and simple – George is in the loving hands of God. First point!

Second: our dear Lord, Jesus, said, "I am the resurrection and life he who believes in me, yet shall he live and whoever lives and believes in me, shall never die." George is such a strong believer in the Lord and I can testify to this from the reverence with which he approached his ministry of reading the word of God in the liturgy. That is a strong index of his belief in the Lord Jesus. Although clinically pronounced dead, dear Swallow, I want to assure you that with time, you will come to accept – with me – that George is not dead but lives. He lives, now in the Lord!

I seriously regret my inability to be at the funeral. You know too well that if by a most unlikely stroke of chance and by way of a first-class extraordinary miracle, I am able to book a flight to Indy, I would (have) pick(ed) the next available ticket to your husband's funeral. Because George (and you) saw me a stranger in Bloomington and welcomed me with such an inexplicable tender love, hospitality and generosity. Right from the first term of my stay in Bloomington! Be assured that George has a place in my prayers and Masses in PERPETUITY. May he rest in peace. Amen.

With deepest compassion



Rev. Fr. Jude Orakwe

A REQUIEM FOR GEORGE LEACH

Requiem, my dearest George!
From far away Nigeria,
My eyes roll in tears,
As I write this elegy.

Dearly beloved George,
From far away Africa,
Father Jude mourns for your departure,
With bleary watery eyes!

O father of the stranger,
A humble man of the gospel,
Steeped in the observance of no other law,
Except the Law of Christ.

Beloved George, so generous,
Yours, the home for the lonely distressed.
Forget I many times you made me welcome,
In your humble Nazareth-like home?

Ever contemplative George,
In your mouth, the Word of God
Is never read or recited,
But proclaimed, ever new and fresh

O man of the beatitudes,
Who doubts you inherited,
The whole world with your meekness,
And evangelical simplicity of life?

George, I know not how to mourn you,
I am short of words,
But you are always in my heart,
And ever shall be in my prayers

Dear George, *requiem aeternam dona tibi, Dominus noster, Iesus Christus!*

Rev. Fr. Jude Orakwe (jatomaria@gmail.com)
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