

DON'T FORGET ME

During a routine visit to a military chaplaincy center, Dr. Robert W. Tindall, Director of Chaplaincy Services in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), was invited to assist in celebrating Holy Communion at an institution for the mentally ill.

The service, which was carried on with the usual quiet and dignity given to the sacrament, was suddenly interrupted from the pew by a patient's cry: "Don't forget me!"

The whole sanctuary remained silent and calm. Then the patient stood up from his seat, went over to the altar of the small, modest chapel, walked behind the altar table, tapped the minister leading the Communion service on the shoulder, and again begged, "Don't forget me!"

The random unfairness of this broken, imperfect life had left the young man mentally ill; but as the bread and cup were about to be shared, something deep inside the man's soul was touched by God's Spirit, and he asked to be remembered.

Most theologians believe that Jesus was on this earth for thirty-three years. That's not a long time to live—I think I'm safe in saying that pretty much everyone here in this sanctuary has lived longer than Jesus did. And theologians also believe Jesus' ministry of healing and redemption lasted for three years. Again, that's not a very long time to work. My ministry, for example, has been going on for over thirty years. And the vast majority of people who are employed work much longer than three years.

Even so, during that brief period of time, Jesus always remembered the mission his Heavenly Father sent him to do. And he always remembered the needy, suffering people God had sent him to minister to. The gospels record that Jesus "went about doing good." "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," he once said, and God had anointed him to preach good news to the poor, release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind.

When Jesus sat around the table with his disciples to share a final meal with them, his ministry was threatened and very soon he would experience

denial, betrayal, a mock trial, and death on a cross. But the words in his farewell to his disciples can still be heard, and through the Scriptures Jesus speaks them to us even now: “Remember me. Do this in remembrance of me. Don’t forget me.”

This morning, as we prepare to receive the Sacrament of Communion at the Lord’s table, may we always remember the one who established it: Christ our Savior. Let us never forget Jesus’ life, his love, his sacrifice, and his gift of Eternal Life for all who remember him and believe in him. Because Jesus never forgets us. Amen.