

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.  
Vespers St. Therese of Lisieux  
Solemn Opening of the Cause of Vincent Capodanno  
October 1, 2013



At this celebration of solemn Vespers on the Memorial of St. Therese of Lisieux we renew the initial beginning of the process for the canonization of the Servant of God, Father Vincent Capodanno. We hear St. Paul speak about the immediacy and the importance of the journey to our destiny of eternal life.

The great saints of the Church are remembered, because they kept their focus on Christ and on living with Him. St. Therese gives us the example of a very little girl who captured that focus early in life and never lost it. Her death at a young age ended the pilgrimage, but the heritage of that short cloistered life continues to nourish the journey of countless men and women.

Father Capodanno lived only about fourteen more years longer than Therese and yet his memory animates those who knew him and those of us who are learning more about him each day. It is impressive to see those who join us every year for the celebration of the Mass on the anniversary of his *dies natalis*.

Sanctity in the Church is to be the way of life for all of us, but when we recognize it in extraordinary proportions we are obliged to make it known so that others might be inspired and grow in holiness. We need witnesses. Not to have them, especially from among our contemporaries or almost contemporaries is to be deprived of additional models for our growth in holiness. We need guides. We crave someone to show us that we can be salt or light.

Our Nation has often recognized the extraordinary contributions of chaplains to the war effort and in service to the men and women in uniform. An overwhelming number of those recognized have been Catholic priests.

However, we would like to see the heroism of Father Capodanno, of Father Kapaun, and of Father Lafleur presented for the inspiration of believers everywhere. What we do this afternoon will bring nothing to Father Capodanno. This is not some posthumous medal. It is for those who will learn about his faith and courage. He gave the utmost so that others might live or at least maintain hope in those last moments of the pilgrimage. It is hoped that his virtues will be imitated and that he will be an intercessor for priest-chaplains in the challenging days ahead.

What Paul described for the Corinthians was a person for others. Ultimately, that is our Christian vocation. The examples and mileposts we meet on the way urge us to live that vocation and witness it for others.