

A LETTER FROM REV RONA

The end of December and beginning of January have been a difficult time for many, with death rates in this area rising beyond the seasonal norm. Some refer to it, rather glibly, as “funeral season.”



For priests like me, who guide families through their loved ones’ funerals, I’m always reminded of how uniquely precious each individual is. There’s a profound truth in Matthew 10:29-31: *the God who knows when every sparrow falls also knows and loves each one of us*—whether we know Him or not.



So, God knows, and cares that your loved one has died. The Matthew passage also adds the seemingly impossible thought that *God numbers the hairs on our heads*. I used to tell my children this, running my fingers through my hair, and when a strand or two fell out, I’d say, “God knows I’ve just lost those!”

Leading funerals is a privilege because I hear extraordinary stories about seemingly ordinary people—though, of course, they are never ordinary. They are beloved family members and friends. Visiting families, I hear touching, and often funny, anecdotes. These stories remind me how profoundly we shape one another’s lives.

This Christmas, I received a book by Simon Boas, *A Beginner’s Guide to Dying*. I commend it to you as an honest and uplifting reflection on facing death. Simon’s epiphany is that we are all unique and precious. He writes that when we say, “I’m fine,” what we’re really saying is, “I’m unique, finely crafted, and an exquisite example of creation.”

That’s what God says about us, as echoed in Psalm 139: “*You are fearfully and wonderfully made,*” and Isaiah 43: “*You are precious.*” Let’s strive to think of others this way—whoever they are and however we meet them.

Thank you to all the families who have shared their beautiful stories with me.

With love,
Rev. Rona