



The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

Sermon: Funeral for Hartwell Lee Loy – March 1, 2019

Uncle Hartwell Lee Loy was a good shepherd. He taught students. He raised a family. He worked with teachers. He supervised principals. He was a church leader. Uncle Hartwell was a good shepherd.

Shepherds and sheep bring to mind for me a place back home on Hawai'i Island where there's an outpost of Parker Ranch way up mauka, a place called the Humu'ula Sheep Station. I drove by Humu'ula the other day, very early in the morning, on my way to Hilo from Waimea, connecting from Waiki'i to the Saddle Road.

The morning was pitch black, 34 degrees, no moon, not a cloud in the sky. All there was as I drove past the Humu'ula Sheep Station was me, the road, and the magnificent stars above me in our beloved Hawaiian skies.

And then I got onto the Saddle Road, and drove down into Hilo, the town where Uncle Hartwell was born, and then down Haili Street and into the morning twilight and the swaying coco palms along Hilo Bay, and I looked onto the horizon of my day and my flight to Honolulu.

And it made me think of Uncle Hartwell and how his childhood began in that Hilo Bay twilight at dawn and then looked beyond its horizon as well, beyond its horizon to Honolulu and into an incredible life as an educator and district superintendent.

But then I bore in mind that Uncle Hartwell's journey, this good shepherd's journey, might've begun not on the shores of Hilo, but in the stars and that wonderful, magical starlit vista in the skies above the Saddle Road—in the presence of God.

When I lived in Hilo and served at Holy Apostles Church, we had more than one astronomer in the congregation and one Ash Wednesday after I imposed ashes on his forehead, he looked at me and said: You know, Father, stars are actually made of dust, so instead of saying "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return," maybe you should say, "Remember that you are stars and to stars you shall return."

And my mind was flooded with those words as I drove past the Humu'ula Sheep Station and on and up that road at Waiki'i and into that pre-dawn early morning Hawai'i Island sky: Remember that you are stars and to stars you shall return.

I find comfort in those words as I encourage and invite us live into our call to let Uncle Hartwell go, to let him go back to the stars in the skies above the Saddle Road on the Big Island as his spirit then looks back down onto the sands of his birth.

And we send him back on that journey and into the stars from whence he came; from whence he came to us to shepherd us with insight, with goodness, with kindness and with love. And may those stars guide him back to God the way they guided the Polynesian wayfarers to our Hawaiian shores under Hānaiakamalama, the Southern Cross.

"Our beloved Church regards her children as having bodies as well as souls to be cared for, and sanctions the consecration of these and all that is beautiful in nature and art to the service of God." . . . - Queen Emma.

Hartwell Lee Loy – March 1, 2019, cont'd.

And when we miss Uncle Hartwell and yearn to feel his gentlemanly presence; when we long for him to shepherd us the way he did for so many of us with his impeccable manners, his acts of kindness and his words of encouragement; all we need to do is look up at the stars and know that he is again one with those stars as he continues to shepherd us with lessons learned to guide us and memories given to sustain us until our time comes to join him in the stars from whence we came as well, all the time bearing in mind the words in the famous poem of the Old Astronomer to his Pupil:

Though my soul may set in darkness, it will rise in perfect light; I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.

Uncle, we need fear no darkness in our lives with your ever-present starlight to guide us and cast away all darkness, and to leave us with your lessons and your memories and your blessed assurance that your spirit will continue to be with us as we continue to forge on in the lives that God would have us live. And one day, we look forward to joining you again in the stars of our beloved Hawaiian skies.

And until then:

The LORD bless you and keep you: The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Thank you, Uncle, for everything—for being the husband, father, grandfather, uncle, teacher, gentleman and friend that you were to all of us.

You are our good shepherd and our guiding star, and to the stars you now return.

Amen.