

Eulogy/Homily for Glenn Pyle officiated by Scott Winters, MA

March 26, 2022

Glenn was born on May 30, 1928, in Alliance, Nebraska, and was the third of four sons born of Willis and Pacia Pyle. The family immigrated west to Oregon in 1936 because of the Dust Bowl drought that forced many farmers off their land. Willis and Pacia packed up their sons along with one bucket of potatoes, which was all their farm produced that year. They drove cross country in a Model A with a two-wheel trailer in tow. They were poor with only \$50 dollars in their pocket.

They settled in the Corvallis area and this is where he and his brothers grew up. Their father was a mechanic, and he taught all four boys the trade. Their mother was Methodist and took their family to church weekly.

As you all know, Glenn's first love was airplanes! He first became enamored with airplanes he saw in the sky when he was a young boy in Nebraska. He would watch the planes fly by and thought to himself, how fun it would be if he could do it, too. This dream never left Glenn, and when he was a teenager, he went against his mother's wishes and got his private pilot's license on a Piper Cub even before receiving his high school diploma. Glenn graduated in 1946 from Corvallis High School with a diploma and pilot's license in hand.

Both his grandpa and father enjoyed flying. I think the flying gene runs in your family. He would often share about his love of flying with me in our visits. The best way I can describe it to you, is that it was a spiritual experience for him. He would smile with joy as he shared how flying is the best feeling in the world. He truly loved flying and would talk about it with contagious excitement to anyone that would listen.

His love for flying served him well in the Air Force during the Korean War from 1950-1954. He had fond memories of working as an Electronic Technician on the C54s and B29s when he was stationed in Japan. He earned several medals during his service including a Korean Service Medal, UN Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Good Conduct Medal. He told me he remembered everything about his time in the service. He held good memories and also not so good memories. He really missed the guys he was in the service with and reflected on their friendship and would grieve during our visits. Those memories never left him.

In 1951, Glenn found love and married Marian Harding McDonald at the Methodist Church. She traveled with him to some of the installations where he was stationed while he was in the service.

They returned home to Corvallis after he completed his duty in 1954. They were blessed with four children: Linda, Mike, Cathy, and Karen, who are all present here with us today. I know your dad would be so pleased that you are all here together.

Glenn earned a degree in Electronics Engineering in 1964, and went to work for the City of Corvallis. He also owned an auto mechanic shop there.

Not long after that, the family bought 30 acres of land. This was a dream come true for Glenn. He had never started a self-sustaining farm before, and this is where they wanted their children to grow up. And I'm sure they have stories to tell. Linda and Karen remember having horses, chickens, a rabbit, cats and dogs, and four cows.

Now about these cows. Sometimes they wandered out of their fenced pasture, as cows can do. And when that happened, it was everyone's job to go after them. To round them up. This could happen day or night, and I know the children have memories of running outside in their pajamas chasing down those cows. Hopefully you all found them without too much trouble.

He raised their children with the motto "Give them responsibility and they will figure it out." The family learned to do a lot of things this way, and it wasn't always easy, but they learned how to be resourceful and appreciate hard work and ingenuity.

Glenn was very intelligent and knew that for the farm to function well, he needed to build a bridge across the creek that ran through the property. Without the bridge, they had to carry groceries and other supplies across a dilapidated bridge to the house. So Glenn took on the task of learning how to engineer a bridge. He made it from a railroad flat car, used a crane to lift it into place, laid concrete foundations, and built ramps. How proud he was when it was complete and said "that is would last forever."

Glenn was a lifelong learner, inventor, and had a curious mind. These traits lead to lots of fun adventures as a family. He would often say, "If you're not having fun, you're doing it wrong."

Since his brothers were all mechanics as well, they are remembered as standing around the popped hood of a truck, laughing, as they told each other the latest funny stories.

Glenn loved to laugh and have a good time. And, he also faced some big challenges as well. He shared with me about the obstacles and difficult

experiences he had while flying, and he would often relate them to the challenges in his life.

One time he shared the story of landing his plane in a strong windstorm, and how he hung on hard and kept it stable despite the wings dipping back and forth. He kept going despite the difficult and heart-wrenching times and chose not to give up. He told me he was glad the hard times were over and was grateful he did not have to go through them again.

He tried to stay positive, saying tomorrow will be a better day. Most of all, Glenn was a kind man, and brought acceptance to people wherever they were in life and whatever they were going through. Perhaps the pain he went through helped to deepen his compassion and empathy for others. When there were disagreements, hard feelings between friends, he tried to make things right. I learned about his friend, John Billows, who would visit Glenn on Mondays. Glenn was so thankful that they reconciled and became close again.

Glenn spent the rest of his life here in Oregon. He loved seeing his close friends and having adventures with his buddies. They would go rock hounding, build model airplanes, and visited the Boeing Museum in Seattle. His other interests include his love for flying sailplanes, archery and owning a catamaran. And that's just to name a few. He often spoke of how much he enjoyed seeing his children. He final wish was to see all his children before he died, which came true for him. This brought him joy. He loved his three grandchildren, Pacia, Lilith, and Kelley, and adored his many nieces and nephews.

He was peaceful, happy, and loving in his final months of life. He loved sharing stories which brought laughter, tears, and a reconciliation with all

the parts of himself. This brought him to a final place of peace where he could rest and let go.

Glenn died on January 22 at the age of 93.

Glenn will be buried at Oak Lawn Memorial Park in Corvallis, where many of your family members have been laid to rest. There will be a gathering of story-telling there at his gravesite on Saturday, May 28th and all are invited.

Today, being here, remembering...it can bring a variety of emotions when we reflect on Glenn's life. I know, what I just shared, was just a brief snapshot of his life, and there was much more to his life that he experienced. Glenn will be missed by each of you in your own way, as you had your own unique relationship with him.

I invite you take a moment to get in touch with your own memories and feelings. Perhaps you are aware of having a variety of emotions including feeling sadness, gratefulness, laughter, and love. Perhaps you are remembering others who have passed on before.

As we grieve and remember, it's important to honor all of the feelings that show up on our path. Welcome their gift. This is not always easy, but they are doors into Life's deeper understandings. God's love can bring light to the sometimes dark and confusing path of grief and loss. Something we all must experience at one point or another.

Death brings us face to face with our own life, too. There is opportunity in this moment to be reminded of how quickly this life can travel and how we can be grateful for the life we can share together, today. A chance to begin

anew, to reconcile, to offer forgiveness. To build a new bridge, as Glenn did, between differences. From this moment on, our living and our actions can be more loving, generous, and connected.

In moments of loss, there are always certain treasures we can hold on to. Our family, friends, and our faith may be the most important. But also the little things, like remembering Glenn's laughter, his passion for auto racing, riding motorcycles, and being a Studebaker enthusiast. In fact, anything that reminds you of the good times you shared together. This helps to keep their memory alive. These memories will always be yours to cherish.

And one thing we know for sure, is that if you can fly in Heaven, Glenn has flown to new heights like never before. He will be waiting for us to join him when that day comes. May it be so. Amen.