



Father Danny Murphy is a retired Pastor from Brooklyn NY. A gifted man with a God given talent to inspire and God's gift to us at Holy Cross Church in Vero Beach Florida. This is just one of his inspirational homilies.

Danny Murphy – Funeral Homily – December 21, 2016

Maybe some friends and neighbors have mentioned to Nancy's family that this is a tough time of year to have a death, a funeral. Everyone else seems to be celebrating at this time of year, and here we are dealing with death and grieving at the loss of someone whom we knew and loved. Some years ago, an aunt of mine, with whom I was very close; my closest aunt, she died on December 22 and the same thought ran through my mind: "What a terrible time of the year to have to deal with death, and grieving and mourning and all that goes with that." And then, it had to be the grace of God; but almost like a lightning bolt, it hit me and I said: "Wait a second, Christmas, celebrates that because Jesus came, our sins are forgiven and our inheritance is restored." Our inheritance as God's children is heaven. None of that would have happened were it not for Christmas! He came...we're saved. He

came...our sins are forgiven, our status as God's daughters and sons is restored with the inheritance of eternal life. So from that moment on, whenever I think of my Aunt Molly I always remember that she died December 22. You remember that today, December 21, you are at a funeral Mass, but maybe you can link it with Christmas in a positive way, rather than saying what a terrible time to experience a death. Maybe it's a good time if it can remind us what Christmas does and what it did for Nancy. Now what about Christmas for us the living; what does it mean for us? Well I am going to just mention two things, and it connects, of course with Nancy, but two things that perhaps Christmas does for us. One, is – and the Church has always taught this, I'm not making this up! (You're not supposed to make ANYTHING up when you're up here talkin', but I'm CERTAINLY not making THIS up!!) This is (thump, thump) solid theology, here, alright?! The church has always taught that Jesus did not have to suffer and die to save us. All he had to do was become one of us, which he did, at Christmas! So, what he could have done was, be born as a baby in Bethlehem and then say: "See ya, see ya in heaven!" And our sins would have been forgiven and our inheritance would have been restored. All he had to do was to become one of us. But that wasn't the Plan, was it? (CAPITAL P, for Plan). The Plan was that he lived to show us how to live. He gave us the blueprint on how to live our lives by his life and his message. AND the horrific, horrendous suffering that he endured and the cross of Calvary gave us a glimpse, and it's only a glimpse, of how much God loves us, how MUCH God loves us. He didn't have to do that, and whenever we suffer, whether it be mourning over a death,

whether it be physical pain, or whatever it is that constitutes our suffering, we can join ours with his and we can carry the cross together. If he had left as a baby at Bethlehem, none of that could have happened. So that's how I look at Christmas in one way; that he could have, but he didn't. And the other, and I mentioned to you our inheritance as God's children is nothing less than Eternal Life! Eternal Life, how do you compare eternal to this – we're passing through here. Even if we live a long life, long in our eyes is miniscule when compared to eternity. I read this somewhere and I wish I could remember where I read it and who said it, because I have been using it for years and it has been so helpful for me. I think it was one of the mystics, but there are many mystics so I'm not sure which one actually said it. One of the mystics describes heaven this way, did you ever ask yourself, "What's heaven like?" We don't know, we were never there and nobody came back to tell us what it's like. Here's what the mystic says: Heaven is Endless Ecstasy! Endless Ecstasy, not because we're so good, but because God's so good! That is what your Nancy is experiencing now and will forever more. And, because of God's goodness, that the day and the hour that God chooses, we will join her in endless ecstasy!