

Remembering Susan Colón

We are here to remember and honor Susan's life. Susan and I began working as Baylor faculty at the same time, now ten years ago. Our families soon discovered a kinship in a variety of areas. Of course, given all the Victorian novels that Susan had read, she couldn't help but develop a capacity to enjoy good English tea (served hot, rather than cold, naturally). Our families both enjoy reading aloud to our children and good conversation—as well as good tea—but above all, we shared a desire to follow the Lord together.

In the last conversation that I had with Susan, the day before she died, she rallied her strength, looked me in the eye, and with a slight smile said to me, “Are you ready?” I said, “Yes, I'm ready. Are you ready?” She said, “Yeah, I'm ready.” She died with the same quiet courage and faithfulness in which she lived.

One of our colleagues, Elizabeth Corey, has pointed out, “Susan was a beloved teacher, but she never cultivated a following [...]. She never seemed to worry about whether people noticed what she was doing; she simply did it.” This seems to me to get at something of Susan's distinctive combination of virtues, in some sense her *charism*—that is, the gift that she was given in order to share with others. What was that gift? It was a humble desire for truth that led her also to the desire for goodness and beauty. Ultimately, she was able to show her students, for example, what Christian scholarship really looks like because she discerned the unity of truth, goodness, and beauty in the person of Christ.

Like her daughters, Susan grew up as a reader. Of course, like many of us, she initially started reading for pleasure, but then discovered that learning to read well could also lead to other things. Reading well, she found, could also help you grow in practical wisdom. In many ways, the word “wisdom” best describes this union of humility and desire for truth that characterized Susan's life and best describes the way that she influenced so many of us—as we witnessed her gentle heart seeking to live faithfully before God each day.

Each one of us here has our own unique treasured memories of Susan—some memories that maybe you alone have. But how would Susan want us to remember her life? In keeping with her character, she would, I think, want us to remember the godly example that she provided throughout her life--as a faithful follower of Jesus and as a lover of God and her neighbor. Whether we consider her life as a teacher, scholar, colleague, and friend, or her fulfilling her calling as a wife, a mother, a sister, or a daughter—in each of these callings, her hope would be that she revealed the truth, the goodness, and the beauty of God's self-giving love. I know, and you know, that she succeeded.

We are all grieving her loss. We are not reconciled to losing her, and we are broken. In this brokenness, we can remember the great gift that God has given each of us in Susan's life. In one sense, she is hidden from us right now, and in our grief, we have hope of resurrection—for her and for ourselves: she is, as the Apostle says, “away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). But in a further sense, her life continues now to be a gift to us. Even as we journey toward the same threshold that we shall all face, Susan's faithful and loving actions will continue to bear fruit in our lives—fruit that co-operates with God's redeeming work in the world and therefore shall endure.

The peace of Christ be with you.

Phillip Donnelly
June 27, 2012