

TRIBUTE – ANNE WILSON BATES

I am saddened tonight that I have lost a friend, a sister, a mother and an icon of Christian love and charity, Anne Bates, the founder of our organization, Marycare (www.marycare.org). You waited for me to arrive tonight. Amidst your labored breathing and congestions, you listened through our prayers and commendation of the dying. We told you we love you. I assured you that I would stay with you for the night. I whispered into your ear that I would walk Will and Dawn and their daughters to the car and that I would be right back. As soon as I got off the elevator on my way back, the nurse told me you were gone. Even on death bed, your selfless spirit prevailed. I guess you didn't want me to suffer the pain of watching you take your last breath. You always worried about other people. You taught me the value set of making humane difference in the lives of others. You made me believe in the value that any life that does not touch another life in a positive way is a wasted life, a principle that guides everything that I do. You told me in the hospital that you just wanted to do God's will. And that's all you did. You made sure that the weakest of our society, the poor, the oppressed and marginalized did not escape your gaze. You saw each individual as a child of God regardless of their race, social economic status, and sexual orientation. For you, every individual mattered to God.

Albert Pine once said: "What we do for ourselves dies with us and what we do for others remains and it's immortal." I agree. I am who I am today because of you Anne. And for that I will forever remain grateful. I was nobody, lost in Buenos Aires and God positioned you along the path of my prosperity. That forgettable individual you met in a city of over ten million people is today a priest, pastor of two churches, a Ph.D Candidate at Uconn in counseling psychology, and above all a true committed believer in touching hearts and changing lives. I sometimes wonder what life would have been if you had turned your back on me 18 years ago. My history would be incomplete without your imprints.

I am so grateful that you allowed me to share in your grace, and immense love of God. Thank you for teaching me about the things that matter in life. Thank you for finding in me a son that you never had. Your memory will forever live on in not just me but above all in the hearts and minds of so many downtrodden men, women and children you have given hope in their hopelessness, light in their darkness, and faith in their faithlessness. As you helped God answer my prayers 18 years ago, so will I pay it forward by helping God answer the prayers of the often forgotten of our world through Marycare. May the God you faithfully served here on earth welcome you into the Mansion He has prepared for you among the faithful.

Adios

Rev. Emmanuel Ihemedu