

**LTC Pete Kilner's Eulogy at Fr. Edson Wood's Funeral Mass,
15 April 2014, West Point NY**

I am Pete Kilner, and I first met Fr. Wood in 1982, when he was my high-school Latin III teacher. Over the years, he and I enjoyed many spirited conversations. I'd like to share with you a couple of those conversations with Fr Wood that contributed to my growth as a Christian.

Fr. Wood challenged me some years back, saying that until I had thought deeply enough to recognize the utter mystery of God, I would still be stuck in an elementary-school-child's faith. He asked some difficult questions. Why does God often seem not to hear our prayers? Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? Why did God allow Fr. Wood's own father to die a cruel death from cancer? How are there three persons in one God? He said to me, "Until you have allowed yourself to doubt, you haven't forced yourself to have faith." Faith, he explained, is a decision--despite all the things that we can't understand—to trust that there really is a God who knows each one of us, who loves us, and who orders all things for good.

A second lesson I gained from Fr. Wood impacted my relationship with God. Once when he was talking about God—a bit flippantly, in my opinion—I stepped away from him, joking about the likelihood of a lightning strike taking him out. "That's your problem, Peter," he said. "You put God up on a pedestal; He wants you to relate to Him as his child and brother. Haven't you ever been frustrated with your parents? Don't you ever get PO'd at your siblings? What do you do? You and your family members talk honestly with each other—expressing your thoughts and emotions—and you listen to each other, and in love you sort things out. That's the relationship God wants with each of us—a personal, family relationship. Peter, you need to 'be real' with Jesus so he can 'become real' in your life."

On his 44th birthday, Fr. Wood reflected on his life to that point. He wrote: [quote]

"If I had to do it over again, I think I'd still be a priest. My talents and strengths seem to point in that direction, and I don't do badly at the vocation. In quiet moments when I'm not manic about the things that drive me nuts...I feel satisfied that I've kept my trust with Jesus of Nazareth. Hopefully, Jesus can see through my wild denunciations, my dramatic speeches, my frustrations, my disillusionment, my weakened humanity...[and see] to the level of the driving and relentless restlessness that prohibits me from being really satisfied with anything in this human dimension."[unquote]

Last Wednesday, Fr. Wood transcended "this human dimension." I know that he looked forward to joining the saints in Heaven, to being united to his Savior as well as to his family and friends who had journeyed there before him. Now, he has. *Beatis tua amicitia atque ductus sum.*