



*Anglican Orthodox Church*



## An Esteemed Lady of the South

Making the lonely drive to Atlanta, my mind dwelt upon the significance of the Holy Communion and its application to the staunch Christian Lady to whom I was traveling to administer same, Mrs. Arwyn Dallis. Mrs. Dallis was a long time supporter of our church and was a lady of high principle and character.

What was the Holy Communion to this dear Lady whose earthly life was measured in days and not weeks? Did the Administration of Holy Communion hold a special blessing for such a one, or was it simply a motion of custom to be correctly performed?

As I was admitted into the sick room of this devoted saint, I was reminded of the sanctity of the place. How many prayers and secret petitions had this good lady uttered in the silence of her years of suffering? Having visited a year earlier, I was aware of the nature of her strong faith and courage. She was not a casual believer. Moreover, Arwyn was an American of the first order. She loved the country of her nativity and the God whose sovereignty over that Land she never doubted.

I could sense that Arwyn was delighted by my visit. We considered each other old friends, more because of commonality of belief than years of association. When I asked if she would mind my giving the full Communion Service, Arwyn nodded her approval.

My voice sounded hollow and empty as I sang the processional, 'The Church's One Foundation,' as I processed to the makeshift altar which had been the stand-alone serving table. I used the same portable Communion kit which Arwyn had donated the church earlier. It seemed that Arwyn appreciated my voice much more for meaning than for virtuosity. Her eyes were misty with memories as I sang 'My Country tis of Thee.' As I went through the service and proceeded into my sermon, Arwyn lay still and attentive. As we recited the liturgy, I saw that Arwyn's eyes were closed. At first, I mistakenly thought she was sleeping, but she was not. Her lips were repeating every word of the liturgy from memory. I knew that she was recalling a less painful time in her life – perhaps a time when a beautiful young girl was kneeling by her parents at church and going through that same prayer book service. Arwyn was a special Lady and one whose going heralded a great loss to the intellectual and spiritual being of the present church. But Arwyn did enjoy the Holy Communion as she had done countless times in her youth. I was reminded that the Communion Service is not time-sensitive, but it is eternal and for all the host of God – living and dead.

After the completion of Communion, Arwyn and I chatted of other times and places. She designated a small vase for me to take home to my wife as a gift from her. She also remembered that Betty had favorably commented on a stone rabbit which dwelt on her fireplace mantle. She told me to take it to Betty. Arwyn's mind was quick and alert.

I held her hand and asked her to call at any time she might need a friend with whom to chat. I assured her of our love for her....and I kissed her forehead, not only to show my own love for this dear Saint, but to demonstrate the Love of our Church for her as well.

As I left her room of dying, I realized that I would not see her again in this life, but I had the sure knowledge that I would do so in the world to come....and that world would be much more heavenly because of the presence of Arwyn Dallis.

May the Angels of God attend her every need and may she find rest and solace in the bosom of her fathers. Arwyn is surely in the divine Presence of Christ where we hope to have the privilege to meet with her again at such time as is deemed appropriate by our Maker and Friend, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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