

**I will keep my covenant with you ... to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.**

***Genesis 17:7***

The golden June morning had broken bright and warm through the hospital windows. With its breaking, the attending physician and chaplain had received a page. Dorothy had taken an unexpected turn. She was struggling both to live and to die.

As they attended and comforted her, Dorothy managed to whisper " ... wait for Henry." Henry, her husband of fifty-eight years, had arrived promptly at 7:00 a.m. daily for all the weeks of Dorothy's hospitalization. Glancing at her watch, the chaplain saw that it was just 6:50 a.m.

When, after ten eternal minutes, Henry appeared at the door, he carried a small bouquet of yellow roses from their beloved garden. Quickly apprehending the changed situation, he laid the roses aside and hurried to hold Dorothy for the last few minutes of her life. In the loving, covenanted presence Dorothy had waited for, she finally embraced a peaceful death.

It had not been easy for Dorothy to die, nor, from then on, had it been easy for Henry to live. Still, through many bereavement visits, the chaplain watched their long, honest love arise to heal Henry. Through prayer and the benediction of memories, Henry realized that their love, like the roses still blooming in their garden, was both fragile and perpetual.

In this week's readings, God again calls us to such a love. As God brought Lazarus, Suzanna and Shadrack out of darkness and death, so God promises to bring us. "I will keep my covenant with you," God says. "Whoever keeps my word will never die."

Accompanying Jesus, as he nears Jerusalem, let us trust and cherish these promises in our own darkneses and bereavements.