

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

The week after Easter, my wife and I were in Orlando, visiting with son Thomas. Thomas has been living down there for almost a year, and in that period, this is the most time we have spent with him.

While Thomas was at work during the week, Susan and I did a few odd jobs and took care of some errands. We tried doing a little exercise, running around the lake near where Thomas lives, but found our motivation was really lacking. Mostly, we just lounged by the pool, reading our books and enjoying the sun. After such a cold winter, it was nice to be hot again.

When Thomas arrived home, we usually had dinner waiting. He was so happy to have his mother cooking for him, and Susan prepared all his favorite dishes: tacos one night, steak another. By the time we finished eating, we were all pretty tired, and so the rest of our evenings were spent watching movies on the television.

Over the weekend, Thomas and I played golf in the mornings, while Susan laid out by the pool some more (it is her favorite thing to do). Neither Thomas nor I played particularly well, but that did not matter so much. We were just happy to be out there. And, after the rounds were over, Susan would meet us for lunch, during which we would recount the good, the bad and the ugly of our golf, the three of us smiling and laughing the whole time.

It was a great week.

And then, before we were ready, it was time to say goodbye.

Saying goodbye is hard, particularly when it is someone we love. Goodbyes can make us feel empty, almost hollow inside, like a part of us is missing. In our family, we call that the "pit-ty" feeling. Not "pity" as in feeling sorry for someone but "pit-ty" like there a large pit in your stomach, a black hole where nothing exists. No light. No life. Nothing. It's an awful feeling, that pit-ty feeling.

Easter, though, reminds us there is no such thing as goodbye. Yes, we may not see our loved ones for a while, but they are still with us. We carry them in our hearts. Their images are captured in our souls and travel with us, wherever we go, until that day, sometime in the future, when we finally see them again. That is the Easter promise. It is the promise which shines light into the black hole. The promise which drives away that pit-ty feeling. The promise of no more saying "goodbye" but only "see you soon."

Blessings and Joy,
Andrew