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Two Men in the Light

By Lynn Barr Drake

One day last winter a young man died unexpectedly. He was a loving and intense person, wise for his years; creative, and filled with love for all life and people. He celebrated his world's beauty in his drawings of Ninja warriors, dragons, and knights. Japanese swords and a cross decorated his room as he dreamed of college and had thoughts of going to Concordia.

At his memorial service, many people came to share their love. The music was glorious, the flowers were heavenly, and the preaching spoke of comfort and peace. As his parents eyed the baptismal font through misty eyes remembering their only child now gone, the Paschal Candle brightly danced its flame into the chancel and into their hearts. They remembered this light of God's promise as people filed by to give hugs and words of love and encouragement. One man came through the line and gave an especially warm and endearing embrace: a pastor-professor with a soft voice and a ready smile; a love for God and beauty and Japanese culture. One Sunday in early January he preached a sermon that made the boy's parents cry and then later told them of how when writing it he remembered them and the loss of their son.

The winter turned into spring, and the young man's parents began to go on with their lives as best they could. On the evening of the Great Vigil of Easter, they came quietly to the church where the Paschal Candle stood tall, shining

out its golden radiance. A joyful sadness touched deep inside as they remembered how its light last filled the church and the room of their hearts on the day of their son's burial. The pastor-professor enthusiastically hugged the parents, remembering the special meaning of the Resurrection for them and himself this year--a reference to his own battle as he smiled and joyfully exclaimed how well he was feeling. He thanked them for pictures sent which the boy had drawn: Japanese warriors and English knights battling dragons--all to cheer him as he prayerfully fought his dragon on a personal, courageous journey to eternal life.

At the end of April the couple sat among the faithful in the crowded church, among the saints from Concordia, Japan, and many other places. They all praised God with holy sadness as the Paschal Candle burned its brightest, bringing Heavenly Hope to all who came. A special joy filled the hearts of this mother and father as they remembered their friend who helped them in grief, now united joyfully with their teenage son. The journey was over: Christ had defeated the dragon of death with the Paschal flame's burning Resurrection Truth. As the two men were now Home, the congregation also departed again with the new resolve that only Easter-glory can enkindle.

-- In Memory of Stephen Drake and The Reverend Clifford Horn