

# Antonin Scalia's funeral reflects a life of faith

BY ROBERT BARNES  
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — If the week since Justice Antonin Scalia's death focused on his life as a man of the law, his funeral Saturday reflected Scalia as a man of faith.

Vice President Joe Biden, congressional leaders and the city's elite were among the thousands who attended the ceremony in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the largest Catholic church in North America.

But despite the grand setting, the ceremony was largely free of the encomiums that mark the send-offs of Washington's political class. Instead, it followed the dictates of religion and placed the emphasis on the Christian promise of resurrection.

It was a fitting service for Scalia, who died Feb. 13 at 79. He was a devout Catholic and was the member of the Supreme Court most vocal about his religion. He urged fellow intellectuals to be "fools for Christ" and once used an interview to underscore his belief in the existence of the Devil, whose latest maneuver, he said, "is getting people not to believe in him or in God."

The funeral Mass was celebrated by Scalia's son, the Rev. Paul Scalia, a priest in the Arlington Diocese.

Paul Scalia reminded mourners that they were gathered to recount "what God did for Dad." He went on to celebrate Justice Scalia's faith and dedication to his family with a blend of levity and reverence.

"We are gathered here because of one man," Paul Scalia said. "A man known personally to many of us, known only by reputation to even more. A man loved by many, scorned by others. A man known for great controversy and great compassion. That man of course is Jesus of Nazareth. It is he who we proclaim."

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the archbishop of Washington; Bishop Paul S. Loverde of Arlington; and Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigan<sup>2</sup>, the



DOUG MILLS | USA TODAY | POOL  
Maureen McCarthy Scalia, widow of Associate Justice Antonin Scalia, walks behind the casket after the funeral Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on Saturday.

papal nuncio to the United States, were in attendance.

So, too, were all of Scalia's colleagues on the Supreme Court, and two of the three retired justices attended as well. Sandra Day O'Connor, 85 and in frail health, was not there. But John Paul Stevens, 95 and David Souter attended. Clarence Thomas, a fellow Catholic and the justice most ideologically aligned with Scalia, read Romans 5:5-11.

Thomas ended his reading with the verses: "If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life? Not only that, but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, took time away from campaigning ahead of Saturday's South Carolina Republican presidential primary to attend Scalia's funeral Mass. Cruz, who served as a clerk in the 1990s for then-Chief Justice William Rehnquist, was expected to resume his campaign events later in the day.

President Barack Obama was not among the mourners. He and first lady Michelle Obama paid their respects Friday at the Supreme Court, where they viewed Scalia's casket and met privately with members of the family. Obama and Scalia were not close, but the decision not to

attend the funeral has sparked consternation among conservatives. The White House has noted that Biden and Scalia had a personal relationship.

More than 6,000 people filed past Scalia's casket on Friday in the Great Hall of

the Supreme Court. The court extended the visiting hours until 9 p.m. to accommodate those waiting in line.

Scalia liked to attend parishes that offered traditional Latin Mass, and on Sundays he could be found at St. John the Beloved, near his home in McLean, or St. Mary Mother of God in Chinatown.

His funeral Mass was conducted in English.

The fact that a Catholic of his stature did not have his funeral Mass celebrated by a high-ranking cardinal or bishop but by his son was seen as important and sentimental.

The Rev. James Bradley, a Washington, D.C., priest who blogs on such topics as liturgy, homilies and church music, said it showed the priority of Scalia the Christian over Scalia the public figure.

"It's quite a beautiful thing to celebrate your father's funeral. We all dread doing it, but it's significant. If a cardinal or bishop presided, they

may feel bound to celebrate the Mass of a public figure. But his son, he celebrates as a Catholic," Bradley said. "I suspect [Justice Scalia] would be happy that it's focused on the gospel, the Christian belief and the resurrection. It won't be taken up by the political side of things."

The political impact of Scalia's judicial rulings, however, was on display outside the funeral. Members of the Westboro Baptist church demonstrated outside of the basilica. In 2011, Scalia joined in the majority opinion that said the group had a First Amendment right to protest at funeral services.

It's standard at Catholic funerals to omit a eulogy, but Paul Scalia offered a homily. The family has planned a memorial service March 1.

"The Mass is a celebration of Christ's sacrificial death for our sins," said Chad C. Pecknold, a theology professor at the Catholic University

of America, adjacent to the basilica. Long eulogies about the deceased distract from that central point.

Nevertheless, Pecknold said Scalia's death has struck the region's Catholic community.

"This is a very important moment for Catholics in Washington," he said.

Scalia was something of an ambassador for the church, Pecknold said, promoting the Red Mass that the justices attend on the Sunday before their new terms begin in October. And Scalia created a social media storm when he attended Obama's second inauguration wearing a hat modeled after one worn by Saint Thomas More, the patron of politicians and statesmen.

Scalia probably would have wanted a funeral that focused on God. The American Conservative this week published a letter Scalia wrote in 1998 praising James Goodloe, a Presbyterian minister who

presided at the funeral of Justice Lewis Powell.

Scalia said he did not approve of flowery eulogies. "Even when the deceased was an admirable person — indeed, especially when the deceased was an admirable person — praise for his virtues can cause us to forget that we are praying for, and giving thanks for, God's inexplicable mercy to a sinner."

Scalia said he had gone to enough funerals of famous people to "consider myself a connoisseur of the genre." He said a trend toward relatively secular services seem moved by a desire not to offend non-believers.

"What a great mistake," Scalia wrote. "Weddings and funerals (but especially funerals) are the principal occasions left in modern American when you can preach the Good News not just to the faithful, but to those who have never really heard it."

## A reverse mortgage could help you live more comfortably.

- Supplement your retirement
- Pay off your mortgage
- Buy a home
- Lifetime monthly payment

### Heidi Eastman

Reverse Mortgage Advisor  
NMLS #1200643  
207-299-7283  
heastman@rfslend.com  
www.rfslend.com



# Subscribe

for just \$24.95

That's 12 full issues of Bangor Metro magazine for just **\$24.95!**

**Already a Bangor Daily News subscriber?  
You can get the Bangor Metro for just \$14.95!**

#### Your information:

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

#### Send a gift subscription to:

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Pay by check.  VISA  MasterCard  DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD # \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRATION DATE \_\_\_\_\_ CCID CODE (3 digits on back) \_\_\_\_\_

NAME ON CARD \_\_\_\_\_ AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

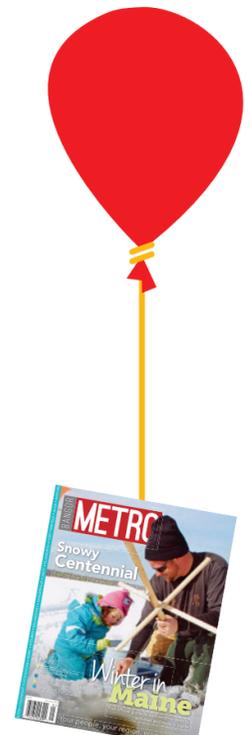
CARDHOLDER'S ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

\*Price includes sales tax.

Mail this form with payment to:

**Bangor Metro Magazine • P.O. Box 1329 • Bangor, Maine 04402-1329**



For subscriptions,  
call **990-8075**

