

Danielle Juzan

Audacity is defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as follows: “bold or insolent heedlessness of restraints, as of those imposed by prudence, propriety or convention” Danielle’s death, needless to say, was audacious... She was young, vibrant... too young to die... but that’s the way she lived... with audacity... She lived with a bold heedlessness of restraints.... So today we gather from the corners of this city to make the audacious claim, not only to claim, but to celebrate, that love is stronger than death. We are here because we love Danielle... and because she loved us... and that reality is not mere consolation... that is a reality of eternal proportions...that in the human community... community in its deepest sense... Love never dies, and love is stronger than death.

As people of faith... and by people of faith, I don’t mean denominational practice or allegiance... I mean people who practice the art of conscience... people who search passionately for truth and act on it... people who serve the greater good... people who love their neighbor, in short. As people of faith it is our audacious vocation to be icons of God’s love... icons, windows through which God’s love is seen and experienced in the flesh... God’s love that is engendered among God’s people... in the intimacy of community.... in serving a fine meal... in helping out those less privileged... in calling out injustice.... God’s love only expresses itself through us, brothers and sisters... anything else is mere dogma, abstraction, and theory.... And our sole purpose in this short life is to love heedlessly, unrestrained, beyond convention, audaciously... the way God loves.

I don’t know what is next... what awaits us after we die... but our sure and certain hope is that we enter a wider awareness, an unrestrained consciousness... that we stand in the joy and freedom of the truth, the truth that is so fragile and fleeting in this life... In my imagination I think Danielle still, as we speak, holds her love for the subjunctive tense... still holds her love for beautiful music... still believes that it is in irony that one might find the heart of the matter... that her expletives are still well chosen... that she still fights for the oxford comma... that she knows more fully that it is love that makes a meal... that, like the pilgrims on the road to Emmaus, the reality of the risen Christ is found in the simple yet profound act of breaking bread among friends... that well-wrought words really matter ... and that our sacrifice for the other is what changes things... changes things for the Good that God dreams for the world... that the world is being brought to its perfection still, born by our capacity for love.... We have artifacts of

such a claim... we have her words, words sprung from her wry imagination... her words that bear forever a passion for life... and most of all we have our love for our sister, and we know through the sacred gift of memory the love she had for us.... And friends remember always... love never dies.... And love is stronger than death.

Dear people of God, in this improbable journey we call life, that is the legacy in which we stand. It is the only reason we are here on this earth.... To love heedlessly, to love unrestrained. May we forever stand in the light that gutters in a world beset by the dark... It is the light of love that changes everything... Take courage good people.... Take courage and stand boldly in the audacity of God.