

Anne's eulogy

I'm Joseph's daughter, Anne. Dad would joke that I was his *favorite* daughter, because I am his *only* daughter. My response was, of course, that he was my favorite father.

Thank you for coming today. Your being here with me today to say farewell to my father is a testament of how well loved he was. Your comments about Dad have been heartwarming. Almost everyone who has spoken to me about Dad has used the words 'sweet', 'gentle', 'kind' and 'gracious.' This was indeed Dad's personality, yet in his own nearly 92 years of life, he experienced much that was not sweetness, and kindness.

He was born into a privileged household in northern China. He was the grandson of Paul Splingaerd, known as the Belgian mandarin, and, his mother came from a well-established Catholic family in China's far west city of Lanzhou. His early years were fairly spoiled, as you can imagine when you are the only son in a family with 8 sisters, in a land where sons are held in high esteem. The family had servants, American cars, and they ate well and dressed well. The first tragedy in Dad's life occurred when he was 11 - his father Remy died. This resulted in his being sent away to a boarding school away from his family. Other events that affected Dad's life were World War II and the Japanese Occupation. My parents saw people around them suddenly deprived of the comforts of life, of material goods, food, and even of life itself. This experience, like the great Depression in the US, had a profound effect on their lives, and my parents had a respect for food and for avoidance of waste that lasted well through the years when there was no longer a scarcity of food and goods.

What helped my parents through the difficult war days and having to leave China with only what they could lug out, which by then included two young children, I believe what helped both Mum and Dad through the hard times was their faith. They each said the rosary daily, and trusted that God would be there for them. Although I sometimes suspected that Dad liked going to church because it gave him an opportunity to sing in front of an audience, I think both my parents had a deep faith in God that guided their entire lives. I am confident that they are now reunited with each other and in the presence of our creator.