

Thomas' Eulogy by Tobias Hoonhout

There once was a boy. A boy who, with his family, moved from outside Washington D.C. to the unfamiliar land of Long Island. And this boy started the fourth grade in this very parish where we all are today. At first, it was tough for him, trying to get used to his new surroundings and classmates. He also missed his friends and his school back home. But one afternoon in that first week or so, heading out to his parents, this boy befriended a person who would go on to become the closest friend the boy had ever had. That person was Thomas Matthew Miloscia.

Standing here before you nine years later, this boy has changed. A lot. But after all those years, one thing that hasn't changed is my admiration and respect for the type of person Tom was. I bet many of you have stories like mine, where Tom's genuine, friendly personality shone through even the darkest of moments to touch a life. I was fortunate enough to have Tom in my life for a long time, and I am so thankful for every moment I had with him. For over those nine years, first here at SSPJ, then at Chaminade, and then these past few months of college, we became more than friends. We became brothers.

He was always a special person. I have countless memories of our times here in grade school when his up-beat manner or his goofiness would turn even the dullest of moments into something special. And after starting high school and taking the train together, every ride you knew something funny was bound to happen. But despite all the jokes and all the laughter, I think the greatest thing about Tom was his concern for others. I have never met anyone with such a good heart, who would put the needs of others before his own 11 times out of 10. He inspired me in more ways than one to look out for friends and family, and I am forever indebted to him and his actions for the lessons I learned.

I still remember vividly the night Tom called, nervous and frightened, to tell me that he had cancer. And it hit me hard. I sat there in shock, wondering how such a thing could happen, especially to a guy like Tom. Literally two days before we had been laughing and joking with not a care in the world. I could only imagine the thoughts racing through his head. But this wasn't an ordinary individual with an ordinary outlook on life. This wasn't even an extraordinary person. This was Tom. After that first night, I never once saw him afraid, discouraged, depressed...nothing. Tom faced this newest challenge with a positivity and determination that I can only hope and pray for.

Sure, the following months were tough at times. But Tom never complained, never said a word about his pain or his discomfort. It was almost like his cancer was an alter ego, and he was the only one that knew about it. The person Tom was never changed. He never let this tremendous weight drag him down. His persona and his outlook on life remained what it had

always been, and I started to realize how special a person I had the privilege of calling my best friend. Even after they found spots in his lungs this spring, after we had all hoped it was finally gone, he once again faced his adversary with the same grit and strength I had come to not only admire, but also idolize. For Tom was more than a friend. He was more than a best friend. He was even more than a brother to me. Tom was my idol, my role model, and my hero.

And he still is.

These past few days have been tremendously tough on all of us. I would have given anything to have been there for him at the end, but knowing Tom, he never would've wanted any of us worrying, let alone actually seeing him in a hospital bed. But as equally tough as these days have been, it has been unbelievable to experience the legacy Tom has left. All of you in this church today are a living testimony to that, along with the countless more who are here in spirit. I have seen people that I haven't seen in years, and met new ones, all of whom cared about and loved Tom deeply.

The support of SSPJ and Chaminade has been unbelievable, along with everyone else who took time to pay their respects. And we are far from over. There is a hole in my chest that will always be there from all of this. For indeed, part of me died with Tom. He'll never be able to give a toast at my wedding, or hold my child in his arms, but there is a flip side to this coin. Tom will ALWAYS be with us, each and every one of us. God works in mysterious ways, and clearly He needed Tom in Heaven more than any of us needed him here on Earth. I pray for the day I get to see him again, but until then, he will be with me always, and I will live my life as an example of him to all.

Let us pray that this liturgy helps all of us heal, and that one day we may all see him again in Paradise. God Bless.