Once while driving Archbishop Quinn from a parish event at the end of the day, he turned to me and mentioned that he was experiencing a “certain lassitude.” I said, “You just can’t say you’re tired, can you?!” He looked at me, raised that left eyebrow and responded, “Certainly not!” I was not surprised he answered that way: he always had a strong love for the beauty of the spoken word. Rather, I was surprised that he did not respond in LATIN!

We were reminded of that “lassitude” these past seven plus months as the Archbishop went from one medical emergency to the next. His body was certainly getting tired. But not his spirit! Not his faith! Not his hope and firm conviction in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, his Lord and Savior!

The only way to understand how the Archbishop’s spirit grew even stronger during his illness, and indeed, the only way to understand our first reading from Ecclesiastes, which he chose, is to realize that the Archbishop had a living relationship with the Risen Christ.

Archbishop Quinn often told us, when we asked if he had time for a visit, “I have nothing but time, and then eternity!”

This explains a reflection of Wade Hughan, the Archbishop’s close friend, who gave many of us updates on John’s condition. Wade wrote:

He remains in every way the joyful, generous, and gracious gentleman we have always known, with his wry humor and intriguing commentaries all intact ... he is alive with God’s presence and love... he continues to express how much at peace he is in God's hands.
In the second reading today from First Corinthians, Paul captures beautifully Archbishop Quinn’s concrete and immediate experience of the Risen Christ. For Paul, the Resurrection is not simply a theological concept but a lived reality, an integral part of our Christian experience. Having encountered the Risen Christ through Word and Sacrament in the Eucharist, we are in a new relationship with God through Christ, the Son of God, a relationship that cannot die, that must blossom into eternal life because Christ has conquered sin and death once and for all on the cross. Paul proclaims to us that because of our intimate union with Christ in Baptism, the Resurrection has already taken root in our lives.

Our first reading is quite somber. Qoheleth recognized that life is basically good but he still had to deal with the reality that even the sages went to the same grave as the fools. He, an old man, goes to his grave, walking through a devastated village, strong men bent over, the mourners shrouding their heads, birds not singing, the village well - the source of life - dried up. This is as far as the old revelation could bring people. Why would the Archbishop choose this melancholy reading for his funeral Mass? Because it was up to the new revelation, the Son of God, to bring us over the threshold of eternal life, beyond what Qoheleth could offer, to the surpassing knowledge of eternal life offered us through the Resurrection of Christ.

Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, all things are vanity. But that is all changed now in Christ’s resurrection. That is what the Archbishop wishes to communicate through Ecclesiastes. The joy of the disciple does not come from being inured (wouldn’t he like that word!) to the sorrows and frustrations of life, but by trusting in the power of God’s love to lead us through them.

The Archbishop often spoke of Evangelical hope in his retreats to priests, quoting Habakkuk 3: 17-19: though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. This hope is only possible if Christ is risen from the dead.

John treasured a beautiful porcelain bird given to him by a woman in Oklahoma who had suffered greatly. She said to him, “Take this with you so you will never forget that the Church has a covenant with springtime.” John never forgot that covenant: not in his final illness, not in his darkest moments, not ever: the Risen Christ reigned in his heart.
With these thoughts in mind, what can we learn from the witness that Archbishop Quinn gave to Christ’s resurrection?

The first, I believe, is that through prayer we are called to an intimate relationship of love with Jesus Christ. To be grounded in the resurrection is to be drawn into a profoundly personal relationship with the living Christ, a relationship that is sustained through prayer.

Archbishop Quinn had a great sense of the power of the symbolic gesture. It was no accident that, when he arrived in San Francisco as archbishop, his first, “quiet”, visit was to the Carmelite Monastery of Cristo Rey. Prayer was the foundation of his life and ministry.

The Gospel today makes clear that the flesh and blood of Christ are the source of our life. It is not enough to believe in Jesus, we must also feed on him. Faith and sacrament converge in the Eucharist and bring us the first installments of eternal life right now, the fullness of which we will experience after the general resurrection on the last day. What a gift that Christ invites us into this intimate union with him, feeding on his Body and Blood, even now as we make our way to the Kingdom!

John loved to bring out that you and I are invited to dwell with Christ in the heart of his Father through the Holy Spirit. John’s Gospel begins with Christ inviting the disciples to “abide WITH Him” and ends with them abiding “IN Him.” This is a path of intimacy.

John’s chalice, which is being used today at this Eucharistic celebration, depicts the apostles converging toward Christ. For the archbishop, his life was this constant converging toward Christ in love.

Prayer and intimacy with Christ were hallmarks of the Archbishop’s life and ministry and they speak to us today.

His fidelity to the spiritual life, the inner journey of the soul drawn ever closer to our loving God by our loving God, was clearly evident. For Archbishop Quinn, prayer was not simply a matter of routine but an affair of the heart that engaged his entire life. His spirituality expressed itself eloquently in his undying desire to cooperate fully with God’s will in his life, in his love for the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, in his moving homilies, his reverent manner of celebrating the Eucharist, the countless hours he spent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.
and the spiritual direction he gave to a wide variety of the clergy, religious and faithful. Watching him return to the altar with the Blessed Sacrament after distributing Holy Communion was like witnessing a **living tableau of intimacy with Christ**

Another important witness Archbishop Quinn gave was his **love of the Church**. His love for Christ Himself overflows into love of the members of His Body, the Church.

Lorraine Moriarty reminded me that the archbishop mentioned once at a liturgy here in this beautiful cathedral, that he loved the **view he had from the cathedra** of the Resurrected Christ calling all nations to himself, reflecting his motto *Lumen Gentium Christus*. He gives us that view today as we reflect on his life so grounded in Christ’s resurrection. Believing that Christ’s light was **for** everyone, he strove to see Christ’s light **in** everyone.

Archbishop Quinn was on the shy side and would not exactly talk your ear off, especially during your first meeting with him. But he went beyond that shyness to reach out to all kinds of people, making enduring friendships along the way. He was especially close to **women religious** whom he admired greatly for their service to the Church. He was a mentor to seminarians, a friend of lay men and women, a colleague of many from other faiths, an ardent supporter of professors and an advocate for the poor and those on the periphery.

Yes, his love and service included everyone, but he had a particular love for **priests**. His second “official” visit, more public, when he arrived here as archbishop, was to St. Patrick Seminary. He was completely dedicated to priests’ initial formation in the seminary as well as their ongoing formation throughout their lives. Indeed, his own life of studying, writing and speaking reflected his personal dedication to the ongoing formation God calls us to as priests. Archbishop Quinn always prioritized his service to the priests of the archdiocese. He gave us priests his personal number and made access to him convenient and immediate. Archbishop Quinn always ensured that for retreats, study weeks and days of recollection, the priests of the Archdiocese had the very best presenters and speakers. But mainly, he himself led our Archdiocesan priests to Christ, the Good Shepherd, through his own life of prayer, selfless service to God’s people and his obvious love for the Church’s sacrament of ordained service.
Indeed, the archbishop was truly dedicated to all people in the church and beyond it. The windows of this beautiful cathedral open out onto the City of St. Francis, and Archbishop Quinn always felt that everyone had a claim on his pastoral care and on his loving heart.

Archbishop Quinn knew that partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ would mean that the cross would be part of his life, a cross he embraced with faith and hope, particularly these past seven months.

He would tell the priests, “He who comes with the laying on of hands and the prayer of the Church will not abandon you though at times, as with the Lord, he may lead you into desert places without support or to the Cross which He alone can transform into the tree of Life.”

He often reminded us bishops that is could be difficult for us to accept Divine Providence. We are afraid of the unknown and therefore can seek to control instead of surrendering in faith and hope to the surpassing wisdom and loving plan of Him without whose knowledge not a single sparrow falls to the ground and who clothes the lilies of the field. Such surrender means that we will be led where we sometimes do not want to go, that we will be stretched and challenged, that we will suffer with Christ.

John’s experience at the funeral of Archbishop Romero, his accompaniment of those who suffered and died from AIDS here in San Francisco, his call to serve the universal Church by accepting assignments from the Holy See, bringing light and grace to difficult circumstances, the criticism he sometimes endured as a result: these are reminders of the suffering we are all called to endure for Christ.

Called to new life: A life of grace and renewal, drawing ever closer to the Risen Christ

The cross, then, brings us back to the Resurrection. The cross always leads to the Resurrection.

Archbishop Quinn changed, grew, and deepened through his intimacy with the Risen Christ, his service of the Church and his acceptance of the cross. As his great mentor, Cardinal Newman observed: “To live is to change, and to change often is to become more perfect.”
But this change, this growth, was not haphazard. It was not a vain attempt to be in step with the latest fad or popular movement. For Archbishop Quinn, it was a steady, inexorable growth toward Christ, following Christ’s lead and allowing Divine Providence to take the lead. It was a living reflection of his chalice with the apostles edging ever closer to their redeemer.

Archbishop Quinn set before his eyes the Christ of the Gospels and followed him, in the words of Newman, “…with a conviction, a confidence, and an entireness, which can no more be annihilated than the belief in our senses.” (from J. H. Newman, *Tears of Christ at the Grave of Lazarus*)

Once we have followed Christ in this way, then, as Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis says, “…we should be willing to drop all the baggage we are still holding and leave even our own shabby egos and all their scheming behind in order to advance, naked and poor, toward the one calling us…to rejoice in the fact that being with Jesus is an end in itself, indeed, the goal and highest peak of my existence.”

As I mentioned, at today’s Mass, Archbishop Cordileone is using Archbishop Quinn’s chalice.

This chalice was first used by the Archbishop on July 20th, 1953, the day after his ordination to the priesthood at San Marcello. He celebrated his first Mass, the Votive Mass of the Most Holy Trinity, at the Abbey Church of San Anselmo in Rome with his mother present, some students from the North American College and the Jesuit priest, Father Vincent McCormick, SJ, his spiritual director and confessor.

Now, today, we are gathered around the altar of the Lord, the same altar where Archbishop Quinn led the people in prayer for so many years, using that same chalice that holds the Blood of Christ, crucified in weakness, risen in glory. One cannot help but think that the Archbishop has come full circle. As he prayed so often: “Complete your work, O Lord, and as you have loved me from the beginning so make me love you to the end. (J. H. Newman)

On the paten of the chalice is inscribed a segment of a quote attributed to St. Augustine about the Eucharist: “He who is all powerful could give no more.” As we continue our Eucharist this morning, we ready ourselves to “…eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood”, entering into intimate union with this precious gift of the Father, who could give no more.
It is this gift of which Cardinal Newman prayed: “Lead, kindly light amid the encircling gloom, lead thou me on...I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me.”

It is the Risen Christ, that kindly light, that led John throughout his life and that now calls him to himself as he takes that one step from time into eternity where, to paraphrase John of the Cross, so tenderly God’s love becomes our own.

To him be the power and the glory whose love, in the words of Archbishop Quinn, “engulfs and surrounds...[us], the Kindly Light, which no darkness can overcome.”

And for us who remain, may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.