

He was always the leader of the group, and he was the one to ask whenever someone needed the comfort of the singing of hymns at a loved one's funeral. He would call us and ask us if we could help out. He would arrive with song books and we would practice for a few minutes before the service. He would ask for divine help in prayer so that we could do our best for the bereaved.

When it was his time to go, it was only fitting that there be live singing, as he had provided it for so many others. But without their leader, the group faltered, choked, and could not continue. For a moment there was only silence.

Suddenly someone in the crowd stood up and began to carry on with the song. I recognized them as part of a family that we had sung for only a few weeks before. One by one, others stepped up until most of the congregation had joined "the singers", and the building was soon filled with sound. These had all been beneficiaries of the gift of the man who had led us so many times in song.

It became the greatest tribute imaginable. And in that moment, it rivaled even the angelic host that the soul being honored had just joined.