

Funeral for Marguerite Virostko

Born: June 15, 1957 Died: July 17, 2011 Memorial Mass: July 29, 2011

Readings: Romans 8:28-30, 31b-35, 37-39 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 John 14:1-6

Homily:

All of us here at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish extend our condolences to everyone in Marguerite's family. This is where her faith was first formed and nurtured. It is fitting that we remember her in prayer and lift each other to the love of the Lord during this difficult time.

We give thanks for the many ways Marguerite loved others and was loved. It is during a time like this that we realize how wonderful the gift of love is. It sees us through. As St. Paul reminds us in the Letter to the Romans, no one and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. It is by bonding together today that each of us comes to a deeper appreciation of this truth.

The loss of a loved one reminds us that God gives us a very precious gift, the gift of time. How thoroughly Marguerite enjoyed spending time with her family members and friends. How vital it is for us all to be ever mindful of the precious nature of this gift and to live life to the fullest. Such an important part of that appreciation involves recognizing the sanctity of family relationships and being as supportive as possible to one's family members.

Your memories of Marguerite are blessed by how she took great care of her cats, enjoyed Indy car racing, cheered for the Ohio State Buckeyes and Cleveland Browns, liked tailgating before the games, paid diligent attention to the NFL Draft each year, enjoyed museums, rib burn-offs, shopping, and boating on Lake Erie.

You appreciate Marguerite's soft-hearted nature even as she often was like a Tom-boy on the exterior.

You will miss her every time you gather. How we rely on the Lord to strengthen us as time goes on with assurance that, as He tells us in the Gospel of John, He has gone to prepare a place for people of faith, and He is truly the way, the truth, and the life.

The Scriptures chosen for this Mass remind us with such earnest consolation that as we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, Christ will in God's time bring with Him all who have fallen asleep. Remember often that prayer and sharing in the Sacraments during her illness was such an important part of Marguerite's journey. Remember every bit as often that each time we think of Marguerite, we can do so in a spirit of prayer, thankful for her life, assured that her sufferings have ended, and hopeful that in the fullness of time we will be able to grasp fully the many parts of God's plan that we cannot possibly understand now.

I've been told that there is an amusing image of Marguerite that dates back to when she was a little girl. There she was, outside, with her beautiful blond hair, dressed in a very pretty dress, playing with mud, making mud pies, getting very dirty and even sampling the mud pies in her curiosity.

You know, that image speaks volumes to us today. There is the beauty of the dress, just as there is the beauty of our memories of Marguerite and the beauty of God's promises to raise her to new life. There is the ugliness of the mud, just as the illness and suffering Marguerite endured were among the nasty parts of life that soil the beauty we'd prefer to preserve.

But when all is said and done, life presents its share of images that combine the beautiful with those things that leave us with a bad taste. And it seems like we have no choice but to take the good with the bad as we journey through life.

Smile when you remember Marguerite, and keep that image in mind. Her life is now caught up in the love of the Lord, who cleanses every stain, nourishes with the finest food, lovingly places a garment of victory on Marguerite, and makes all things new.

May this same Lord be ever near us, console us in our grief, and fill us with renewed hope, strong faith, and an ever-growing awareness of His love.