

Funeral for Constance Mary DiFebo (Known as "Katie")

Born: November 5, 1916 Died: May 22, 2009 Age: 92 Funeral: May 26, 2009

Gospel: John 14:1-6

Homily:

As I was prayerfully preparing for today's Mass of Christian Burial, it occurred to me that this sacred property was truly in the center of Katie's life for many years.

Within walking distance just south of here is Pratt Street. That is where Katie grew up with her many family members.

Within walking distance just north of here is the corner of Pearl Avenue and Morse Street. That is where Katie lovingly lived as a homemaker, teaching such important values to those for whom she was responsible.

Between those two places is this sacred property. In the old church building she was baptized on December 3, 1916 as Concetta Corso by Father Nicola Santoro. (He was the priest who built this church building and the present rectory.) Her son Frank told me that there is a picture of his mother wearing her First Communion dress. Imagine the excitement of that day here in this church in the early 1920's more than eighty years ago! That photograph captured the special closeness to the Lord Katie felt on that special occasion.

Yes, this holy ground is between two places where Katie spent so many years. And that is fitting. For we gather today to celebrate the truth that the Lord has been in the center of her life all along.

We know that recent years have been difficult for her as she spent the final part of her life's journey at O'Brien's Nursing Home in Masury, Ohio.

Today we believe the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John. The Lord tells people have faith that He goes before them to prepare a place. We believe that He has prepared a place for Katie.

The Lord tells us all that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We trust in His guidance, depend on His promises, and believe that He enables us to rejoice in His presence forever.

An entire generation passes on as Katie breathed her last in the wee hours of this past Friday morning. We ponder the values, the work ethic, the ways faith and family were the focus of those who came before us, and we give thanks to God for their wonderful examples.

I've been told that Katie mourned the death of her baby son for years and years. Our faith tells us that this wonderful mother and her precious little baby are finally together and shall not ever be separated again.

I've also been told that Katie was not educated in the sophisticated realms of academics, but her wisdom and her love were so genuine and her faith was so strong that she was able to persevere through some very difficult challenges. We depend on the goodness of this same Lord to bring us through the challenges we face in saying goodbye to one we love.

One of the fondest memories her family members have is recalling how she loved to read the Scriptures and draw strength from simple prayers.

Her grandchildren are fond of the many Sundays spent with their grandmother, and her sisters (who have journeyed before Katie) were blessed by the time they were able to spend with her.

We trust that Katie has been called to her everlasting home. Jesus has prepared a place where there is no more rejection, no more sadness, no more longing for a better quality of life.

God embraces Katie as do those who have journeyed before her; Katie's tears have been turned into joy; she knows the fullness of life and love in the presence of the Lord.

The same God to whom she prayed so often fills her with peace. He seeks to console us as we give thanks for the many ways she reflected His love. We are thoroughly convinced that Katie shall continue to reflect the love of the Lord each and every time we remember her, for she will always have a place along with the Lord in the center of your hearts.