

**Homily for the Mass of Christian Burial for Marian Jacobs**

**November 8, 2021**

**Our Lady of the Wayside Parish  
Arlington Heights, Illinois**

**† Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki  
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

As we gather for this Mass of Christian Burial for my Aunt Marian Jacobs, I wish first of all to extend my sincere condolences to her children: Paul and his wife Kathy, Peter and his wife Terry, Perry and his wife Kathy, Patricia and her husband Roger Hoar, and Pamela and her husband Tom Wuich; her ten grandchildren, thirteen great-grandchildren, her sister, Aunt Roseann, her nieces and nephews, and all her family and friends.

She was born on March 25, 1918, at the end of World War II and the outbreak of the Spanish flu. She died 103 years later during another pandemic, COVID-19. In between, she saw many changes in the world, in technology, television, computers, etc. She saw many changes in the Church as well.

While COVID-19 was not the direct cause of Aunt Marian's death—she had a stroke a couple of weeks ago—I would say that COVID was a

contributing factor to her mental and physical decline over the past year and a half. Last year on March 25<sup>th</sup> when I called that morning to wish her a happy 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday, she answered the phone, but I could tell she was crying. I asked her what was wrong. She said it was a very sad day. So I asked why. She said her daughter Pamela had come with her husband Tom and Aunt Marian's great granddaughter to wish her a happy birthday; but the staff of the retirement home would not let them come through the front door because of the safety restrictions put in place to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

With my cousins standing in the foyer while Aunt Marian was in the lobby, separated by the glass windows and doors, all they could do was wave at each other. The most I could do was assure her that I would come and celebrate with her as soon as the situation would improve, and visits would be permitted again. I said at the time that I worried more that Aunt Marian would die of a broken heart rather than from the coronavirus. Indeed with very limited family visits since March 2020, she declined rapidly and over the next few months was moved from her independent living apartment to assisted living and then into the nursing home. Thanks be to God, her family was able to be with her in her last days on earth and I was

able to visit her one last time and give her the Sacrament of Anointing. Aunt Marian was surrounded by her loved ones with the grace benefit of sacramental grace when she died.

Aunt Marian was my Godmother. I have a picture of her holding me at my baptism at St. Casimir Church in Chicago, along with my Godfather, Uncle Eugene Bonat. There are not too many godmothers who can say that their godson grew up to be ordained a priest and a bishop, so I would say Aunt Marian did a great job as my Godmother.

When she celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, I celebrated Mass for her at the Moorings Retirement Community. She asked if I would come back next year for her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday. I suggested we do this not every year but on more special occasions, so I said I would come back to celebrate Mass for her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Aunt Marian said she wasn't sure she would live that long. I had a feeling that she would, which of course she did, and then some!

I asked Aunt Marian's children—my cousins—to share a few memories of their Mom, which I will relate in their own words:

From Paul and Kathy:

We would encourage you to stress that she was all about family - immediate and all relatives. I know she prayed for all often. Just couldn't miss a family picnic!

- She was the chief planner on all family get togethers, even when not being in their home working to make it convenient for all to attend.

- Was a historian for family - present and past. Until the last few years her mind and memory were sharp. She was often called upon at the picnics to remember a date, name, or details around a family event.

- When she moved to the Moorings, she seemed to be given more years as she made friends, participated in events and parties. We as family often had to work out visits around the Saturday Bingo or some other parties there. 😊

- She led the Rosary group there that met bi-monthly. Also helped make door/table decorations for those in the health center/memory care

- At the age of 86 she flew to FL by herself to be our first visitor in our new home. Two years later she and Aunt Ronnie came and they laughed like school girls remembering past days and family They even got into Perry and Kathy's hot tub!

- Made it easy for us. We didn't have to take her car keys away. She just called Paul one day and said, "sell my car".

From Perry Jacobs:

I will always remember our Mom as a nice, funny, caring, loving, and protective mother and family was the most important thing to her.

Being the "baby" of the family, I was always accused of being my Mom's favorite, which was the undisputed truth.

Couple of memories....

I will never forget as a toddler sitting on her lap in the car going to my grandparents or aunt/uncles house and sneezing or having a runny nose and she would whip out her handkerchief from the sleeve of her coat, wipe my nose and back goes the handkerchief in her sleeve.

When I had a paper route, during the cold winter months, I remember many times she would get up before dawn and help me rubber band the papers and put them in plastic bags. Once that was finished, she would get my Dad up and make him drive me to deliver the papers.

Whatever my Mom did, she always tried to make our lives easier.

From Pam:

My mom was a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother. My parents set an excellent example for us and always stressed how important family is. When my dad passed, mom was very lonely. We had to talk her into the

Moorings. She was very reluctant to move after over 50 years in her house. But the day after we moved her, I tried calling her and didn't get an answer. After several attempts, I was getting concerned. Turns out she went to breakfast, made some new friends and spent the morning chatting with them. For many years after that if something was happening at the Moorings, she was in the middle of it. She had a better social life than I did. She always looked forward to get-togethers and couldn't wait for family picnic.

She was very proud of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She carried a purse with her to dinner and always had pictures with her. On her way to dinner, she would stop at front desk and show pictures or share stories with receptionist and anyone that happened to be walking by. Once in the dining room, she would share with the staff before she even made it to her table and then again anyone who would walk past her table.

She was strong willed and a fighter. At 95 she had a hip replacement. She had to be in rehab for a while to recoup. One day I took her in a wheelchair down to her regular dining room and you would have thought royalty had come.

At 100 when she found out she had to have surgery for cancer, there were some tears but then when the surgeon came in to talk to her, she said, "See that picture over there?" She was pointing to the picture we gave her on her birthday that included the whole family. "All those people are counting on me so let's do this. I have a lot of living to do yet" She was up walking the next morning.

Just like my dad had to have a hat, my mom wouldn't leave her apartment without earrings and lipstick!

Some thoughts of my own:

- Aunt Marian was my Godmother. There are not many godmothers who can say that their godson became a bishop! I would say she did her job as a godparent well!
- The cuff links I am wearing were Uncle Bruno's. She knew I liked to wear cuff links and she gave me Uncle Bruno's after he died. To me they are symbolic of how she paid attention to little details, not grand gestures.
- When she turned 95, I celebrated Mass for her birthday at the Moorings. She asked if I would come back next year, and I said I thought I should come back for her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday! She said she

wasn't sure if she would make it that long, but somehow I knew she would, and then some!

If Aunt Marian could speak to us now, I imagine that he would object to all this high praise of her, reminding us that this is not a canonization, but a funeral, saying to me with a little grin on face, "Remember, you're just my godson, and only the Pope can canonize a saint!" As such, we pray for God to have mercy on her soul, to accept whatever suffering she endured here on earth—especially in her last illness—as satisfaction for any time due in purgatory, and receive her promptly into the joys of the heavenly banquet, a foretaste of which we will now share in this Eucharist.

May God give us this grace. Amen.