

ANNA O'CONNOR
Funeral Homily by Fr. Paul Turner

This building is older than Anna O'Connor. But not by much. Her grandfather helped build it. Her parents were married here. Anna's family will miss her. She was the glue that held everything together. But this entire parish will miss her. She is as much a part of this building as the lights, the pews and the stations. She symbolized volunteerism in everything from the altar society to scheduling readers. The Catholic Church anchored her life. When she told you she was praying for you, you felt that somebody was hearing those prayers. She was tough from the beginning. When they baptized her at St. Aloysius in Maysville they had to break the ice in the baptismal font. You always knew where Anna stood. She did not hide her feelings. Probably the most surprising thing she ever did in her life was to marry a democrat.

You could never one-up Anna. She was right 99% of the time and the other 1% was questionable. She was honest and candid. If Jim told her his football team was undefeated, she told him her classmates' team was unscored on. If one of the girls said, "Try one of my cookies; they're really good," Anna said you should let others tell you whether they're good. When Susie, the youngest, was a teenager, she tried to get her mother into a corner with the words, "You never wanted to have me anyway." Anna told her, "I didn't want to have the last five of you."

But don't you believe it. Anna loved her family. She loved her children and her children's children. You could ask Anna how she was, but she would tell you about her kids. She raised a strong family of striking individuals, smart, loving and talented. She encouraged, challenged and scolded people lovingly to do their best and never quit. Grandkids learned grandma was no pushover; they had to learn how to beat her in checkers - she would not just let them win. Later she got a real estate license to help people get the property they'd need to raise a family or start a business. But she believed a woman's place was in the home, even though women could do better than men in some jobs.

If she could sit up right now and speak to me, she'd say: enough about Anna. Talk about our faith. Our faith is that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised up. In his resurrection he has opened the door for all of us to rise from our tombs. He reigns on high and forgives our sins. He will judge us at the end of time. Those who are faithful will enjoy happiness forever as God promised through Isaiah to provide for all people on a holy mountain. God sets that feast especially for those who opened the doors of their home to the family, and who served as host and peacemaker. That's our faith.

But we wouldn't have that faith if it weren't for people like Anna. I understand she wouldn't want me talking a lot about her. But she also believed that whatever the priest says goes. Well, Anna, this priest has something to say to you. Thanks. Thanks for your service, your faith, but especially for your family. You will live on inside these walls and beyond these walls, and you will help us live with Christ forever.