

Mary was born before the Wright Brothers flew their plane. Before World War I. Before they invented Mothers' Day. She was born when Albert Einstein was formulating his theory of relativity, when a new opera, *The Merry Widow*, opened in Vienna, when Picasso began his pink period and when Ty Cobb began playing baseball. She lived a wonderful life, 93 full years. She spent 69 of them married to Fred, which is no small accomplishment on its own, and during that time she raised a terrific family who knew even better than the rest of us that she was a lovely person.

Here, Mary became identified with St. Regis and Archbishop O'Hara High School. She and Fred were devoted to fostering religious vocations and to the Christian Brothers. She joined our crafters and loved making things for the benefit of her parish church. She wore her years admirably with peacefulness. Nothing seemed to concern her. She had a ready laugh, an engaging smile, great hair, and a confidence about life. The only thing she could never figure out is why in the world she was living as long as she did. She told me several times she was ready to go and didn't know why the Lord wouldn't take her. I guess even God knows the joy of delayed gratification -- if you have to wait for someone, you enjoy them all the more. Mary had many accomplishments here in our parish and within our extended community, but most amazing of all was her simple, genuine ability to be your friend. She didn't have to work at it, she didn't pretend to be somebody else, she never had to prove anything. She was just through and through a delightful person who delighted in you. Sometimes our senior citizens tell me the hardest part of growing old is all your friends die and you're left alone. Mary lost a lot of friends, but as you can see from looking around this church, she was never left alone. She kept making new friends. Everyone in every generation loved her.

She looked with longing for the day when she would behold God. Isaiah prophesied the coming of a day when God would provide for everyone, when the veil of death would be destroyed, when God would wipe away the tears from all faces and remove sadness from the whole earth. People would shout out, "See, there's our God, to whom we looked to save us. This is the Lord for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

St. Paul says at the end of time we will all be changed. Our corruptible bodies will take on incorruptibility; our mortal bodies will take on immortality. Mary lived in that hope. As her aged body continued to age and continued to age, she never lost hope in the eternal youth of her coming redemption.

Jesus promised the repentant thief he would bring him to a place that was music to his ears, a place called Paradise. That's the home for which Mary longed.

In our church these days we speak about a funeral as a celebration. Often it's a word that just doesn't ring true. We're too busy feeling sad, sensing our loss, focused on our sorrow. But I suspect for most of us, this funeral really is a celebration, a celebration of a marvelous life, full of years, robust with laughter, overflowing with love. We celebrate Mary Oberrieder today, who longed for paradise. May she smile forever. May

she see God face to face.