

July 21, 2019

From Fr. Jim . . .

A Life well-lived: Each Sunday while I am getting ready to leave my house and come to church for Mass, I like to watch Sunday Mornings with Willie Geist on NBC, channel five. A segment of the show is entitled *A Life Well-lived*. Last Sunday Marion Spencer was featured. She is from Gallipolis, Ohio but she studied at and graduated from the University of Cincinnati. She passed away at age 99. She was a civil rights advocate and pioneer in Cincinnati. She fought to integrate Coney Island and its swimming pool in the 1950's. Mrs. Spencer was the first woman to be elected to Cincinnati City Council in 1983. She also served as a vice mayor. Her life was truly a life well-lived working for a more integrated city, being kind and loving to all.



Let me introduce you to Ilda Browning, 94 years old whom we buried from St. Leo this past Tuesday. For some of you she needs no introduction because she was a very active member of St. Leo and always a good friend of the parish most of her life. She loved this parish and raised her family here and in this neighborhood. In recent past years, she has been confined to a nursing facility where she died. Her love for God exceeded her love for this parish, her husband who has preceded her in death and her love for her children and family. But her love for her husband, children, family and her parish were the ways that we expressed her great love for God. She knew God's Great Commandment of Love very well. Love for God and neighbor was truly the command that governed her life well in this world and is leading her now to the promise of eternal life.

The Gospel selection for her funeral Mass was Matthew 5:1-12, The Beatitudes. Jesus teaches all disciples how to have a life-well lived in the kingdom of God. To hunger and thirst for righteousness is every disciple's longing and desire. To be right with God is to receive God's unconditional love and to share this love with all others as generously as it has been given to us. To be right with God is to lay down our love with all others as generously as it has been given to us. To be right with God is to lay down our lives so that others can have life. The Son of God put on our humanity so that we could share divine life and become blessed and holy. Depending on the virtues of the Spirit of God is a holy and blessed life and a life well-lived in this world and in the next world. The love of God for God's people is eternal. Death cannot stop it.

Ilda was from Italy and returned many times to visit family and friends. She met her husband Paul there during World War II while volunteering for Red Cross. They had a long marriage and they were very devoted to each other. Dedication and faithfulness were strong characteristics of her well-lived life. She was very faithful to her faith, to this church and mostly to the God who lives here. She always gave and forgave because that is what God wanted. This is what she told and modeled for her family.

One year at Thanksgiving she invited a family in need to their house to share their meal. Ilda would remember a time in her life when she was without food, so when she had food, she always wanted to share it with those who had little or nothing to eat. She was a great cook and baker. She would find out what you liked to eat and surprise you with your favorite dish. I was a beneficiary of her fabulous pineapple upside down cakes! She was wrapped in the love of God and she wrapped her family and others in this love. She was poor in many ways but rich in the things that mattered. Blessed is she who lives their life well with the love of God now and forever. Thank you Ilda for sharing your love and your life with all of us. May you rest in peace, united with your husband Paul and all the faithful departed. May God wrap you in his love and mercy forever.