

- This morning we are honoring Sr. Judy Monahan, who for 30 years served our parish faithfully. As we do, we lose a part of our parish history.
- The Sisters of St. Joseph were a part of our parish for over 60 years, and Sr. Judy was the last SSJ to serve at St. Ann's. So many of feel the loss she is to us, even though she was gone from our midst for more than a year before she died.
- I met Sr. Judy on my very first day at St. Ann's in July 2007. I was sitting in my new office trying to get it organized when this large lady in shorts, a T-shirt, and tennis shoes can bounding in and asked me if I were Fr. Reid.
- I had no clue who this lady was, but when I said yes, she replied, "Well aren't you cute!", and then she hugged me around the neck. I was mortified.
- It was only then that she identified herself – and I was even more mortified!
- And ever since, my own relationship with Judy has been marked with both laughter and a deep respect for each other's abilities and gifts.
- What I respected most about Sr. Judy was her frankness. She was a person who was always completely honest with me – whether I wanted her to be or not.
- While obedience may not have been Judy's greatest virtue, what she failed in there she more than made up for by her charity. Judy loved. She loved people – all people, and she'd do anything she could to help those in need.
- Sr. Judy just had this touch, this ability to reach anyone. Truly, it seemed that no one was immune from her charm, and God used that bigger-than-life personality of hers to bring people closer to Jesus. Some of you have been the happy victims of her charm.
- As Catholics we look to St. Joseph as both the Patron of the Universal Church and the Patron of a holy death. As the man chosen from all history to be the earthly father of our blessed Lord, St. Joseph is certainly someone worth entrusting one's life to.
- St. Joseph's virtues are so great and so many that all of us can look to him as a model for how to live our earthly lives. As such St. Joseph is a very fitting patron for women religious who seek to imitate his virtues and entrust themselves to his paternal care.
- Certainly our dear Sr. Judy had a great love for St. Joseph and imitated his courage and willingness to care for and defend others so very well.
- Knowing how quickly and relatively painlessly she died, I have to believe that St. Joseph loved her in return. We should take consolation in that thought.
- But more importantly, we need to bear in mind what Christ has done for Sr. Judy – and what He does for all who love Him and die in His friendship.
- The promise of our Christian faith is that if we believe in our Lord and do our best to follow His will in this life, and if we beg pardon for the times that we fail Him, then His mercy is ours!
- As we consider Sr. Judy's life, we have even more reason to hope, for all of us who knew Sr. Judy know that she lived her life well.
- While all of us shared many, many laughs with Sr. Judy and have many funny stories about her, Sr. Judy was a lot more than a person with a good sense of humor.
- She was a woman of intelligence and depth, a woman who knew who she was in this life. She was true to the promises that she made at her profession, and as I mentioned earlier, she was genuinely charitable.

- Judy was academically accomplished. Did you know she had 3 Master's Degrees? In her humility, it wasn't something she talked about much.
- As a priest, as her pastor, as her friend, I believe that Sr. Judy's life was pleasing to our Lord and that she died in His friendship, and as Catholics there's not much more that we can ask for than that.
- So while we mourn her loss, and while we will mourn her loss for days, weeks, and months to come, our grief and sorrow must not have the final word in our souls.
- Rather, we must have hope, and we must hold on to the promises of Christ and pray that some day those same promises will be fulfilled in our own lives.
- Sr. Judy is unforgettable and irreplaceable. She has been a friend, a teacher, a mentor, a counselor, and a sister to so many of us.
- So as we pray for the repose of her soul, let's be grateful for her frankness and forthrightness, for her genuine charity, as well as for all laughs and love she gave us.
- Sister was one of God's little works of art – perhaps a piece of modern, abstract art – but a piece of art nonetheless! Considering that we have a new piece of art in our midst today, I'd be remiss if I didn't say a word about it.
- When we were conceiving ideas for our two mini-murals, it seemed only natural that they should feature our patroness, St. Ann. Because of their placement directly above the statues of Jesus and Mary, I wanted the scenes to show St. Ann with Jesus and Mary.
- And because our parish is so filled with children, I wanted the mini-murals to depict scenes of St. Ann with our Lord and Lady as children.
- So, above the statue of Mary, of course, we have the scene of Sts. Ann and Joachim presenting the Blessed Virgin Mary in the temple, which is a familiar subject of art.
- But with Jesus we've created an entirely original image. In our new mural we see St. Ann seated with the genealogy of Jesus from Matthew's Gospel on her lap.
- The image on the scroll is that of the Tree of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David, and this image shows David's progeny – which are Christ's ancestors – as branches on a tree growing from the trunk of Jesse.
- In our scene as St. Ann shows the genealogy to Jesus with the Virgin Mary looking on, our young Lord also points to the Holy Spirit hovering over St. Ann as if to say, "Yes, I am descended from this human ancestry, but I also come from God."
- Above the new mini-mural, written in Latin is: "The fullness of divinity lives in Christ's humanity" (from Col. 2:9). Below is: "In eternal splendor, before the dawn of light on earth, was He begotten."
- So, the title of this mini-mural is *Jesus teaches St. Ann about His two natures*. In this way, this mini-mural teaches us about the mystery of Our Lord's Incarnation: that Our Lord in His compassion and love became man and dwelt among us in order to save us.
- Hopefully, in looking upon it each of us will silently grow in a greater love for our Lord, and in turn live our lives in a way that is pleasing to Him.
- I am very grateful to all of you who have contributed to our sacred art over the years. Our little parish is now widely known for its beauty, and that would not have happened without your generosity and trust.
- So as we bask in the beauty of all the sacred art that surrounds us, let's commit ourselves to beautifying our souls and thereby prepare ourselves for our eternal encounter with Truth and Beauty Itself: Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Most especially, let's pray for the happy repose of Sr. Judy's soul. May she rest in peace.