

Church of the Good Shepherd  
and  
St. John the Evangelist

December 5, 2005  
Fr. Bill McGinty

**“Lillian M. Carpenter”**

Sixty nine years ago Lillian came into the world. Her life spanned the second half of the twentieth century. When the war broke out she was only five years old. When John Kennedy became President she was 24.

We come together today to celebrate that life. To celebrate what she meant to her family, especially her children and grandchildren. But we also come together because she belonged to this church family of the Body of Christ. It was here that she acknowledged Jesus as her Savior and it was here that she prayed for all those she loved and those who needed prayer.

As the Body of Christ we come together to both mourn her passing and to glory at the way she lived her life. Through rain, snow, flood and storm Lillian was here. While many who lived much closer would give it up at the sign of the first snowflake, Lillian would be here. Over the years she became a fixture here in this front bench. She became an inspiration and that was so touchingly demonstrated in the fall when the Daughters of the King presented her with a “Prayer Shawl” at the 10:00 service. We did not have a dry eye in church that day. We did not have a dry eye because of the depth of affection the people of this parish have for Lillian. Her example, her will, to overcome illness and every difficulty spoke to them each and every week.

Everyone who spoke to Lillian, or shared fellowship with her fell in love with her kind and understanding spirit. It’s Lillian’s spirit that today we celebrate. She could engage you in any conversation and tell you endless stories with humor and knowledge. She could talk but she didn’t judge. She had time for everyone and they loved her for it.

Today, Christ the Lord has come to meet Lillian and hand in hand he has brought her home, home where you need no oxygen tank, or wheels to get around, home where she doesn’t have to monitor the humidity or look for handicap access. Jesus has brought her home to his Kingdom, his heaven, because each and every Sunday she stood by him in this Eucharistic celebration. Each and every Holy week she ‘re-lived’ his death and resurrection, and she made him an important part of her life. Today, Lillian is an important part of Christ’s life.

When we all look back on our lives, we all begin to realize that we have not arrived at where we are at, in life on our own. We had some help along the way. So it is today, with you who are Lillian’s family, children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, sons in law, each of you owe something wonderful to this woman. For you she work and toiled, and she did it gladly because you were the people she loved. For each of you there was advice, and help, love and encouragement. She picked you up when you fell. She celebrated your triumphs and joys. She gave you a shoulder to cry on and listened to your woes when things went wrong. Today your presence is both a thank you and a solemn duty.

The Rev. William J. McGinty, Rector  
110 West Catharine Street, Milford, Pennsylvania 18337  
Phone: (570) 296-8123 ♦ Fax: (570) 296-4383

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Today you can weep at the loss of the woman who was not just your kin she was also your friend. Nothing will replace that loss, not anyone else, and not time, for each of you Lillian was someone special, not only that, but she knew that you were special and she was not afraid to share that. The times you had together one on one were so important to her. She cherished them. They kept her going and she never forgot. She never forgot to thank God for each of you each and every day. Most of all she remembered your many kindnesses, those little things you did for her, getting things at the store, picking up her pills. It was constantly on her lips, "they are so good to me."

Watch out in the weeks, months and years to come when good things happen in your life. It will be Lillian paying you back, good for good, kindness for kindness.

Now today, you have performed a sacred duty, you have brought her to rest, you have given her peace. You have given her dignity and a place in your home and hearts forever.

In years to come Lillian will be just as important to you because without her you would not be the person you are. Thank God today for her and be proud of her that she was the person she was;

May God give her peace and eternal life. May he bless her, now and always. May she shower her children with happiness; bless her grandchildren with long life and every grace.

Amen+