

On November 21st, I was on the road from Saint Louis, Missouri back to Alma. I received a phone call that Marian Pryor was at St. Mary's Hospital in Saginaw. I stopped and made a phone call to Saginaw, contacting two priests to make sure she had been anointed. We were all hopeful that she would pull through. After all, she had made a near-miraculous recovery after that car accident. Last Friday, I drove to Saginaw to give Marian the Last Rites. She passed away the next morning.

Our Baptism brings us all into the Divine Life of the Holy Trinity. We receive as a Supernatural Gift at our Baptism the Supernatural Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love. Natural faith lets us believe what we understand; natural hope works when we see the light at the end of the tunnel; and natural love allows us to love those who are good to us. Supernatural Faith helps us to believe what is unbelievable. Supernatural Hope helps us to persevere when things look darkest. Supernatural Love helps us to love those who are not very nice to us.

Marian and I shared a common bond in our service in the Navy. Her time working in naval hospitals; my time deployed to Japan. Many of you knew her for longer than I did - and could share many more examples of her life. But we honor her by imitating her love for God and the love she showed each of us in how she touched our lives.

I only met her seven months ago. She came up to me and asked me if she could read the Scriptures at daily Mass. The first time I heard Marian read from Scriptures, I loved her for her love for Scripture. And every day for the last several months, she showed her love for God's Holy Word at this very pulpit whenever she would read from Sacred Scripture.

It was the Divine Life she received at Baptism that allowed Marian to do the all things she did - through the gifts of Supernatural Faith, Hope, and Love.

All of us, through our Baptism, have these same Supernatural gifts. And we can honor the memory of Marian by honoring these gifts - and engaging these gifts in service to God and to one another.

I became very fond of Marian - she was always willing to help out and serve. And in the seven months that I was here at St. Mary's I never heard her utter an unkind word about anyone. And she was involved in many areas of ministry at the parish.

Marian told me that her favorite part of the Mass was when the Deacon says: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord and one another. Her favorite part of that was "serve ... one another." Marian gave of herself, and we can also honor her by our service to God and to one another.

Let us remember Marian by making use of the Supernatural gifts we all have received at Baptism. And let us accompany her on her final journey with our prayers and best wishes.