

# Faith, prayer sustain 105 year old

Marianne Oberley-Orris/CNS

ERIE, Pa. — The prescription for long life and good health is simple, according to one smiling 105-year-old — steadfast trust in God and church, and a little dose of port wine now and then.

Carl Krug, the oldest resident of St. Mary's Home of Erie, said that's all he knows about prescriptions. He doesn't require daily medication, unlike most of the younger residents at the home, administered by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

When asked how he managed to live so long, this Catholic man, named a Knight of St. Gregory by Pope John Paul II for his lifetime of service to the church, was quick to explain it to a visiting reporter from the *Lake Shore Visitor*, newspaper of the Erie Diocese.

"By the grace of God I'm alive," he said, adding, in a suddenly gentler voice, "I go to Mass every day, and I love the Blessed Mother. I pray to the Blessed Mother all the time."

As for the key to sustaining good health to age 100 and beyond, Krug also had a simple answer.

"Port wine," he said, his characteristic smile and strong voice returning.

Krug explained that he began drinking one small glass before each meal when he was still a teenager — after almost dying from an attack of appendicitis at the age of 14.

After surviving emergency surgery at the 11th hour and spending weeks in recovery, a turn-of-the-century family doctor told Krug's parents that the spindly young man would do well to henceforth fortify



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**Carl Krug, a former shoe store owner and the oldest resident of St. Mary's Home of Erie, Pa., attributes his good health to his Catholic faith and a glass of port wine before meals.**

himself with a small glass of the rich, dark fruit of the vine before each meal.

Krug did. And he has been healthy ever since.

The peace of mind that comes with turning one's life over to God is also responsible, he said. His long life has been marked by joy born of following the church's traditions with unquestioning devotion.

"I was born and raised in (Erie's) St. Mary's Church. I was an altar boy for years and years. I once

## SeniorLife

served 6 a.m. Mass for a month," he said proudly.

His childhood was divided between nearby St. Mary's School, run by the Brothers of Mary, and his father's popular shoe store in downtown Erie.

Krug's Shoe Store, as it was called, eventually became Carl's. He ran it with the same faith principles that governed the rest of his life.

He recalled that Erie's bishop at the time, Bishop John Mark Gannon, "was a great walker downtown."

"Whenever he was walking and he saw a child that needed shoes, he'd bring him in and say 'Fit him up with shoes and send me the bill.' Well, I'd fit 'em up, but I never sent the bill!" said Krug, with a laugh.

That kind of giving was typical for the Krugs. Carl and his wife, Gladys, were unable to have children, and instead gave their time and money to the church.

"It's just like giving it to God, giv-

ing it to the church," said Krug, lifting his hands skyward as he spoke. "The church needs the money so much."

After Gladys passed away 27 years ago, Carl donated \$500,000 for construction of a chapel in her honor at St. Mary's Home. Gladys, too, had spent her last years in the home that has been Carl's residence for 20 years.

Sister Antonia Domeracki, a Sister of St. Joseph who is one of Krug's private duty nurse aides, said the oldest resident deserves some of the credit for his hopeful disposition.

He has something to teach us all about staying happy and healthy through good and bad, she said.

"Carl sometimes feels down, just like all people," she said. What is different about Krug, she added, is his ability to focus on the things that bring him joy in order to quickly return to his cheerful self.

"He loves to talk and tell stories. He loves to talk about the (shoe) store. He loves a good joke. And when he gets really down, he watches Notre Dame games on TV. That always does the trick," she said.

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## January Events

**Alzheimer's Support Group**  
Tuesday, January 14th • 7-9pm

This support group is open to anyone interested in learning and coping with caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's Disease or a related memory impairment.

**Open House**  
Saturday & Sunday,  
January 18th & 19th  
11am-3pm

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**Glaucoma Seminar**  
Wednesday, January 22nd  
2-3:30pm

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