

Remembrance of Sister Marie Therese Staiger, GNSH

Given by Sister Bridge Conner, GNSH

We are grateful to the liturgy committee for creating a celebration that reflects the wishes of each of the three Sisters we are celebrating today, Sister Marie Therese, Sister Helen Martin and Sister Virginia.

Sister Marie Therese requested Msgr. Stansley for this liturgy. She worked with him in Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in New Jersey and considered him a good friend. Thank you Monsignor for honoring Sister Marie Therese's wish and making the trip from New Jersey to be here with us today to celebrate her life. When I asked him if he could come for Sister Marie Therese, he said, he'd better or he'd hear from her! I suppose Sister has a few things she is telling God right now!

I've been trying to paint a portrait of my brother on and off for the past 6 months or so. He has had at least 1000 versions and none of them really look like him. Sister Maureen Quigley, in her wisdom, reminded me that even though we have lived with someone for years, we still don't really know her very well. I have never been missioned with S. Marie Therese and only have come to know her these past two years. The facts are easy; the music behind the facts give us a better picture of Sister Marie Therese.

A New Yorker, she was born in 1932, and baptized Rosemary. Before entering the Grey Nuns, she taught at St. Leo's for two years. Sister Pat McKeon's sister, Mary, and several others, recall how the students loved Ms. Staiger and would often ask about her. (Music of love)

She entered the community in 1952. Maureen remembers her sense of humor and recalls that in her generosity Sister Marie Therese helped Patti Randel to make her habit. (Music of laughter and care!)

Sister taught for 27 years in various locations: Immaculate Conception, D'Youville Academy, Our Lady of the Assumption, Holy Angels Academy, Cardinal Dougherty, Little Flower, Bishop McDevitt and Sacred Heart Junior College. Sister Katie McGady fondly remembers Sister Marie Therese as a very caring teacher and lights up even at the mention of her name! (Music of attention and kindness)

She earned her Master's degree in Theology from Villanova and used her knowledge in parish religious education for 31 years serving in New Jersey, St Ann's, Corpus Christi, and Our Lady of Good Counsel Parishes.

She had many good friends who regularly visited her, including, Joe, a very faithful friend who brought flowers and presents to her regularly. (Music of friendship)

I would be remiss, while speaking of the music of friendship if I did not recall Sister Marie Therese's own thoughts of how different she and Sister Marian Adrian were but how she loved her visits.

She faithfully helped her sister, Lillian take care of their mother until her death and then looked after Lillian. (Music of affection and dedication).

In these last years, she loved being at Magnificat and receiving wonderful care there. Among those loving care-givers were Maureen Goodall and Chris Domzalski. Sister was sure to give a stuffed animal to each of Chris' grandchildren. (Music of a generous heart)

Sister's heart responded to the Easter hymn Alleluia, The Strife is O'er. She knew suffering. From her legs to her back, physical pain was a constant companion. She also had personal struggles that sometimes got the better of her. Everyone is deserving of respect. All of us have crossed boundaries that we have regretted. Sister Marie Therese was no exception. She has written several notes asking for forgiveness. I am relatively sure in these few years that I have known her, that she would ask for your forgiveness if she has hurt you in any way.

One of Sister's favorite Scripture passage comes from 1 John "We are God's Beloved." Now she is known as she really is, and the music of her life can be heard.

Now as she rests in the loving embrace of her creator, we thank Sister for her 68 years of faithful service as a Grey Nun of the Sacred Heart.