

Sister Loretta Wundrok
Reflection
February 25, 1936 – November 4, 2020

Thank you to Kay, Loretta's sister, Janet Pike, and Sisters Maureen Quigley, Ellie Martinez, John Helen, Eileen Murray, and Mary Teresa for helping me to create this reflection on the life of Sister Loretta and what was truly important to her.

Jesus and Loretta held some things in common. Both Jesus and Loretta knew where to find the fish! They both have boat stories and stories of eating fish with their friends.

Unlike Jesus, Loretta was born in New York, February 25, 1936. She was named after her mother.

One day while I was visiting Loretta, she described her neighborhood to me. She told me the location of her house in relationship to her parish, Blessed Sacrament, and then described a four-block neighborhood where 6 or 7 Grey Nuns were raised. One of them was her very good friend and playmate Sister Mary Patrick who lived on the same street as Loretta.

Summers, Loretta's family vacationed in the Adirondacks or similar settings. Her fishing experiences started there! Her father would take Loretta, her brother Joseph and sister Kay fishing. Kay noted that Joseph became an avid fisherman and Sister Loretta always accompanied him when she was home. Fishing and love of family were so important to her!

She attended St Michael's High School and the Daughters of Wisdom almost had a postulant until her mother reeled the fishing line in and let her know that there would be no jumping ship. We belong to the Grey Nuns! Loretta's community of 67 years was very important to her.

She entered the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart in 1953. Sister Maureen Quigley remembers Loretta's sense of humor; their fun together and the pranks that made others laugh. How important to have an environment where you can be yourself and have friends to enjoy!

Like Jesus, she worked for God's kingdom. In preparing for her work as teacher and administrator, she continued her education, earning her BA from D'Youville, MA in Education from Eastern Kentucky University in 1971 and permanent certification as a New York administrator in 1979. Sister Eileen Murray said that Loretta was smart and a good teacher.

Like the disciples, Loretta was sent. In Buffalo, she served at Holy Angels School and Holy Angels Academy. She taught many places in New York among them, Our Lady of Fatima, St Leo's and Blessed Sacrament. While at Blessed Sacrament she was able

to peek out the convent window to see how beautiful her sister looked on her wedding day.

Kay said that Loretta loved Georgia where she taught at Christ the King and St Jude the Apostle. While teaching in GA, Sister John Helen was called Sister John Melon by a first grader. Loretta capitalized on that and created a paper mache watermelon in Sister John Helen's honor. More than 50 years later, Sister Patsy and others fondly greet Sister John Helen as Melon or Johnny Melon.

For 20 years, Loretta was teacher and principal at St Mary's School in Potsdam, NY. Sister Ellie remembers the lunches that they packed to eat at the local river and the fishing they did on the St. Lawrence River. Loretta was a woman for all seasons. She gardened in the spring and summer and cross-country skied in the winter.

In remembering Loretta's kindness and professionalism, Janet, her skiing partner and school secretary wrote:

"Sister Loretta had so much compassion for students, faculty and staff during her years as principal in Potsdam. She was especially supportive of the teachers and they were always welcome to discuss issues with her that they may have encountered."

"Sister was always there, hands-on and supportive to parents to help in any way possible."

"God was at the center of everything in school."

"The safety of children from coming and going to school as well as in school was one of her great concerns."

Loretta provided a welcoming and safe educational environment. Serving God's people was important to her.

She returned to New York, served in other parishes while also caring for her mother. It was there she developed her great friendship with Sister Dottie. At first glance, one wouldn't expect Dottie to be a fisher person, but she proudly told me that she had caught the first fish on her first fishing trip with Loretta. I asked who took the fish off the hook; she thought Loretta did. Having faithful friends and being faithful to others were important to Loretta.

Loretta believed in a God who cared for her. Family, friends, the Grey Nuns, service to God's people and Loretta's faith, particularly devotion to St. Anthony were her life vests. If there is a fishing hole in heaven, I think you will find Loretta with Jesus and a few of the disciples including her dad and brother Joseph with her mother in the wings. No doubt, she would invite you stay and fish awhile too!