

Sister Marian Irene McMullen

Entered eternal life on February 6, 2017

With praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, we joyfully celebrate the life of Sister Marian Irene McMullen. There exists in every person who knew Sister Marian Irene a wordless yearning to keep her here – treasuring, reverencing, and growing through our human journey. But, to know this Sister of Charity, this Aunt, cousin, teacher, friend – one was aware of Saint Augustine’s words: “Our hearts are made for you, O Lord, and they will not rest until they rest in you!”

It is fitting on this Monday morning that we are brought to this chapel to celebrate Sister Marian’s entrance into heaven. We cannot help but remember, each in his/her own way, the many details, scenes, and events we have shared with Sister Marian. Yes, we are now called to celebrate, with our limited understanding, her passage to NEW LIFE in God. We remember with fondness, and YES, in sorrow with trust in God’s promise, with FAITH in His Resurrection. Sister Marian’s faith in a God of wonder and love was communicated powerfully in the ordinary events that shaped her heart, her thinking, aspirations, joy, and love.

A woman of boundless charity, kindness, and love –She lived within the paradigm of humility and simplicity. We will never know all that she did for those who were less fortunate—burdened, or in need of someone *just to listen*.

Not only did many people experience the generous outpouring of her love – FROM the great city of BOSTON – to this CHAPEL at Convent Station – but each of us also hold threads that formed the tapestry of her life and IN TURN – INFLUENCED who we are today and will be into the future.

As a Sister of Charity, Marian lived simply, but she was extremely perceptive of other people’s character – their strengths and weaknesses – a perception which was often manifested in her ability to get along with other people – to share their joys and sorrows – to celebrate their humanity.

On the other hand, our Marian could be extremely private, choosing to reserve her thoughts especially thoughts about her age – I heard that a gene for denial of one’s age filters through the McMullen women!

But, we had to admit, shy of being age 95 – our dear Sister Marian had no wrinkles – she refused to be old. Sister Marian was an amazing woman not one who sought power or high esteem rather, her greatness was in concern for others.

Fifty seven years ago in my 1st week as a postulant, Marian wrote these words to me from Boston: *strange as it may seem to say I was glad to see you cry when we left as I knew you were holding too much in. I hope you got it all out of your system and then set your mind and heart on your new life in which you will grow daily closer to God—you will do so by making Him a personal being in your life someone real and alive. If you do that you will have no further worries about anything.*

Drinking a hot chocolate Saturday night in Starbucks’s reflecting deeply about these words of Marian and how she modeled this framework...I moved some papers and a small white envelope – dated May 2004---fell onto the table. I had moved these papers over and over for several days. I never saw that envelope---inside---a small



yellow paper with a note from Marian. I read, "Hi again". The rest was about forgetting to send something to me. That night I received 2 e-mails; my daughter Andrea wrote: "Many of us strive to lead such quiet lives of simple goodness, but few succeed. To pay tribute to a woman, who never asked for anything of others but always seemed to give, is the essence of humility for which she was known."

Her selflessness was her soul's reward. Sister Marian was one of those special people that enriched every life she touched. Her calm and pleasant personality made it easy to spend time with her. Thoughtful and intelligent, funny and sweet, -- a loyal friend, she supported our family throughout the years. Always present, always kind.

We grew up loved by her. I saw my own mother find renewed strength to face life's challenges from phone conversations with Marian.

My memories of Marian are filled with love. Looking back on the years, I am reminded that she was a good person. There is really no higher compliment than that to give.

The email from my son, Joseph reads: "It is easy to slip into hyperbole when describing departed loved ones. Marian's unique beauty lies in the simple reality that her life needs no embellishment, because she lived without pretension. Her way was the quiet and the understated; the warm and the kind. I find it difficult to be succinct in this paragraph, so I recall these few memories; her slender frame so eager to offer a welcome embrace, coffee cake and tea on a quiet Saturday afternoon, kind words of encouragement and sage advice, an aura of serenity and joy, a helping hand, sincerity, grace."

Marian's legacy is the feeling of peace and love she imprinted on the hearts of all fortunate enough to know her. Sister Marian Irene had a sensitivity for the good and beautiful. So I do not hesitate to say that Marian had deep gratitude to her friend, Sister Christine Hartman, for the care and compassion generously given over a long period of time. And---in a heroic manner---in these past two weeks.

Sister Christine, you helped Marian deal with a difficult situation. You helped her to die in peace and with dignity. Know – in particular – Sister Christine, Patty, and Deidre – Rosemary – and all dear to her. That Sister Marian left a legacy of joy of self-dignity and of the enduring strength of love above all else.

Just as Christ remains with us, I believe those whom we love remain with us and become increasingly a part of our lives in the daily rituals we share.

Wherever there is song and laughter---Marian will be there with us...

Wherever there is tea and cake Marian will be there with us.

Wherever one of us cares for one another, she will be with us...

Sister Marian Irene McMullen: is here she is now---she is always!

Marilyn L. Castellano