

Sister Margaret Alice Shalvoy

Entered eternal life on August 27, 2017



I wrote this a hundred times since Sunday evening and every one I tore up as it was too sappy or just not right. I know the only way to talk about Sister Margaret, Aunt Margaret or as she became to me, Margaret, is with my heart.

Although in her later years she lost her eye sight, she never lost her vision. At a very young age, she had a sister Alice who was born with multiple deformities and she quickly had to assume taking care of her sisters and brothers, especially her brother Paul who is here today. She spoke so often of holding her sister who did not live past infancy but seared a special place in her heart.

As a young woman of 18 she entered the convent with the same steadfast vision. She knew her calling was to serve God for her entire life and she committed to do just that. I worked with her at St. Joseph's as a 16 year old.

It was during a time when the new wing was being opened and I worked nights as a courier. I spent much time around her staff. I heard more than once a staff member comment, "Sister Margaret's first order is to be sure the patients who are dying get their last rights". I was confused if that was good or bad and kept very quiet, but years later I understood that her sole intent was trust God and give every person young or old the last opportunity to be with him. She never lost her vision.

The thing I will remember most, however, is her hands. Over the years they became arthritic and crooked but her most prized possession. No matter whom you were, patient, family, friend, sister or priest she reached out and brought you into her world. She would hold your hand and if you were lucky pat it while she spoke to you. Once you were touched, you made it to her book.

I'm not sure many of you knew that she kept this book for years. It has the names, birthdays and deaths of many, many priests, sisters, family and friends. She would call me every year and say, your mom died today and I had a mass said for her. Again, I would say, "Why do you remember when people died? I would rather remember when they were born." and she would say 'Because that is when they went to heaven.'

She mourned the loss of her eyesight and I often thought how cruel it was for God to let that happen, but then I realized that he had protected her from seeing all the changes here at the Villa. She simply accepted it all and prayed everyday with her hands on her rosary.

She would be humbled by your coming today and embarrassed that such kind words were said about her as she never looked at her life as much more than praying and serving her God. Her light is not extinguished, it lives on in each and every one of us, because she reached out, held our hands and taught by example how to bring light to many and never lose sight of our own visions.

Maggie Davidson
Niece of Sister Margaret Alice