



Sister Mary Rosarii Downes

Entered eternal life on April 10, 2016

*May you always
have walls for the winds,
a roof for the rain,
laughter to cheer you
and those you love near you.*

~ Irish Blessing

Parental roots in Ireland, born and baptized in NYC, reared in the glorious and eternal Jersey City, Catherine Downes, Sister Mary Rosarii followed the route many of our sisters have taken before her and in your time with you. And she made sure that you enjoyed the trip.

She was an educator, a principal in St. Teresa's Summit and St. Thomas Bloomfield, the Administrator at Seton Manor Community in Vailsburg and she was twice Assistant provincial of the Southern Province. Her final time was at the closing of provinces.

She loved the shore and was a charter member of the Anne Philip Beggans posse at Maris Stella along with Sisters Kathleen Timothy Cronin, Mary Loretta Fahey and Immaculata Maroney. She was the last surviving member of that group.

What she did she did so quietly, one would comment that was a little dynamo, never connecting it to work, but as a quality of a life lived well. She led by example, always did herself what would be expected of others. From her first mission in Ridgewood to St. Anthony's Elizabeth where she tutored students and volunteered at St. Joseph Social Service Center until 2004, she was always ready to be of service.

Rosarii was Administrator of Seton House from 1985 until 1996. She created a happy home there. Sister Christine, a sister from Nigeria who lived there while studying at the College and with Rosarii's encouragement later studied nursing at Seton Hall, was a great help to her. I remember going to many parties there with the sisters from Saint Columba. While at Seton Manor, she took 75 credits in gerontology coursework at the College. It is no surprise that Rosarii was very active on the Villa committee.

Rosarii was close with her family, her sisters, brothers, and as a Michaelian—a student from Saint Michael's in Jersey City her family included the young women who entered the Sisters of Charity and all the siblings that were in school together and their families. And members of her band here present: Sister Mary Canavan, Sister Mary Alberta Keuhlen, Sister Regina Bernard McCartney, Sisters Mary Theresa Regan and Sister Thomas Aquinas Regan.

She was a dancer. With Bernadette Duffy, Jane Carroll, Rita O'Farrell and Noreen Holly they went to Irish set dancing in Edison, not the Irish Dancing like Riverdance, but the square dancing with "Sweets of May" and "Haymaker's Jig"!

I spoke with two of her band, Sister Regina Bernard and Sister Mary Canavan. Mary shared how Rosarii would say to her when they visited together at the Villa. “I want to go home to my mother and father.” Ah, but then you would have to die, Mary replied, and Rosarii answered “I do want to go that far.”

The Gospel tonight was about that road and the trip to Emmaus. If as the Irish say, two together shorten the road, then, if life is the road, it goes so quickly. Sixty-nine years. . .ninety years...so quickly. And don't think she no longer accompanies us on our road forward. She does. Dancing, the sharing of memories and the promise of always welcome.

Sister Deborah Humphreys