



Sister Rose Marie Padovano
Entered eternal life on May 3, 2017

She was an extraordinary woman. She was not impressed with herself. She made one question why women are not ordained priests, not because she campaigned for such a contentious issue but because it was not easy to set limits to her.

Rose Marie was one of the kindest, most generous, open-hearted people I ever met.

She was with me all 80 years of her life, from the tenderness of newly-born life to the sadness of life's passing in death.

I experienced the growth of her heart, the universality of her out-reach time after time.

She had a unique capacity for total dedication to others.

When asked to comment on who she was and is for me, I recall two quiet memories. Her love did not generate attention. It was given effortlessly it seemed. It had become so instinctively a part of who she had become. One of two memories happened when I was an altar-server at our parish church. Holy Cross was some ten blocks away. I found her always at my side. She forced herself to get up while it was still dark, to keep me company when walking the bitter, cold streets. When we reached the Church, she took one of the front pews and watched diligently through the service. On the way home, she told me what I did well and where I made mistakes. She wanted her brother to be as good as he could be.

The second memory was one of our bonding as brother and sister. At home, in a very small house, we had twin beds, side by side. Whenever she felt frightened in the middle of the night, she would reach across the empty space for my hand. It took away the fear so she could sleep. In the last weeks of her life, she reached for my hand. That gesture brought back to both of us our memories of the lessening of fear in each other's company.

When Theresa became a part of my life, she made Theresa a part of her life. Rose Marie was with us when each of the four children was born. Tears of joy were in her eyes; arms were ready to embrace them with all her heart.

My sister was a good teacher, an intrepid traveler of the world as though the entire planet was a village. She rejoiced in the diversity of people she encountered and in their magnitude.

She was a very well educated person, with doctoral-level degrees from two universities and a master's degree from Boston College.

This is the first week of my life in which I am aware of living in the world without her. I do not know what life is like without her being easily accessible, a phone call away.

Whom do I thank for the gift of such a sister? Certainly, our parents and the friends who helped her become who she was. Clearly, the Sisters of Charity who brought her such happiness and sent her regularly to people who needed assurance of how miraculous life is. I include also Sister Patricia Codey who stood loyally and devotedly by her side, not only in the easier years when both were well, but heroically in these final weeks of Rose Marie's life. But God is the only one I can thank for the magnitude of grace and love she was, in so many ways, for so many people.

Rose Marie reached sympathetically not only young children who valued her as an adult playmate, but the college students she taught for many decades and the large number of fully mature adults during all the years' life made possible.

I pay tribute today with gratitude and heartache at her loss. The sheer goodness of her nearness, the redeeming grace of her smile will now be less easily available.

I pray that all people may have such a sister or someone like her. I cannot think of a better prayer to pray on behalf of you at this service and on behalf of all I love.

I was at my sister's side as she died with the following words echoing in my heart: "The one whom we loved has died. She is no longer where she was before. She is now everywhere we are."
(St. John Chrysostom)

Anthony T. Padovano
(Brother of Sister Rose Marie)