

Sister Audrey Furman

Entered eternal life on November 29, 2018



Our thanks to Monsignor John, and Fathers Mike and Walter for all they have done for Audrey and for sharing this beautiful church with us this morning to honor her. Also our thanks to the gifted musicians and singers who shared their remarkable talents with us. I told them earlier that there was a story behind the song "If We Only Have Love". But they were busy practicing and asked that they hear it later.... and they will.

Those of you who have had a chance to view some of the pictures in the back of the church, know that I am a very lucky guy. I went through the many albums that Aud and Bev had, and then Peg arranged them just beautifully.

Several years ago Sister Beverly celebrated her 50th anniversary as a Sister of Charity, and Audrey asked me to make a few comments and as I attempted to do so, my mouth became dry as cotton and it became very difficult to speak. So today I am prepared and will probably pause on

occasion (holding up small bottle of water). I recall mentioning St. Matthew's gospel where he has the Lord saying "Suffer the little children to come unto me". I had trouble with the word "suffer" as it suggested to me "barely allow" or "grudgingly permit". Whereas Aud and Bev seem to have heard in that word "enthusiastically encourage" or "delightfully welcome".

When our sons were young, Aud would question them "Are you my best pal?" When they were 7 and 10, we put them on a plane to fly off to Florida to be picked up by Aud and Bev, who would then take them to Disney World. Prior to this, we had hardly ever left them with a baby sitter! But off they went in a big plane and had a great time! Greater love than this no one has, that they should take your kids to Disney World!

Aud's first of four grand-nephews is Mackin Lee Furman, a 7 year old first grader. My mom's name is Estelle Patricia Mackin and our second son is Andrew Mackin Furman. Mack's parents spoke to him of Aud's passing this past Saturday, and he was quite upset. He had a soccer game on Sunday, for which he put white tape on his wrist with the letter A written on it. They played a much better team of mostly second graders and they trailed at halftime 4-0. After playing much better, the final score was 7-7. Mack had 6 goals on six shots and played his best game ever. At the dinner table later the next evening, out of nowhere and unrelated to any prior conversation Mack said "Well Audrey wasn't there for the first half, but she sure showed up for the second!"

Aud had a way of looking at you with her piercing blue eyes that seemed to me to serve two purposes... 1. to see what kind of child you were and 2. to see how much of a child you still are "Can Johnny come out and play?"

As for her special song, when Aud was a senior in high school she got tickets to see an off Broadway musical with four of her senior girlfriends. And she asked me if I wanted to go...Really? I'm a freshman with four of her senior friends? So we all went to see 'Jacques Brel is Well and Alive in Paris' and it was the first time I ever heard "If We Only Have Love", which was just sung so beautifully. For a long time I thought Aud lived her life according to the words of the song, just without the If. But eventually I realized that 1. the words don't make sense without the If, and 2. the If denotes the choice we have every moment of every day...the choice to choose love or not. My sister made a lifetime of very good choices.

During their 45 years of living together, Aud and Bev moved several times...the last time was from Roselle to Brick, about 12 years ago. After our first visit there, I wrote her this poem:

amid so many changes

and the still newness of a new address

remains the constant presence
of your love for God
and thus for children
and thus for life
like passing clouds of vapor
life's seasons change and unfold
refreshed and nourished
by the river of your love
running though it
same as before
and new as ever

Yes, hers was a lifetime of choices for love, same as before and new as ever. Her life was a reflection of her love of children and of God, same as before and new as ever.

Peg and I, our whole family, are so very grateful to so many of you who have expressed condolences and offered so many forms of support.... friends and good neighbors, former and current teachers and colleagues, the special care givers who took care of her, and her warm family members of the Sisters of Charity. Our special loving thanks and gratitude to Sister Beverly (Beev). For the past 45 years she has shared in our family's weddings, funerals, and baptisms. Many referred to them as Frick and Frack, Aud called them Lucy and Ethel. She was Aud's best friend and we are delighted to call her our sister.

One of the books in Aud's bookcase is a well-worn copy of Ann Geddes "Little Thoughts with Love" It is a picture book of babies...imagine that...with insightful quotes on alternating pages. Some I noted include:

"We can do no great things, only small things with great love.

Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves. Babies are such a nice way to start people.

A new baby is like the beginning of all things... wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities."

And lastly this one, that I can almost hear her saying every day to the children in her care: "Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the years that have passed, there has never been another child like you. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel."

As you know, Aud liked to smile and laugh and she liked surprises. When our Dad passed a while back, she had the great idea to place a square yard of his front lawn sod along with some of his tomato plants on the foot of the casket, and let the floral arrangements flow from that.... so in that spirit, I'd like to ask each of you to stand and while you think of something about Aud that makes you smile all the way to laughter ... let us give her a standing ovation. Thank you.

Justin Furman,
brother of Sister Audrey