

**Sister Nancy Anne Haarer**  
Entered Eternal Life on June 14, 2018



Good Morning!

I'm Don Haarer, Nancy's older brother and I'm here representing Nancy's California family—her nieces and nephew, fifteen grand nieces and nephews – and especially my wife Beth Anne, Nancy's "Sister Sister" and best friend. Words cannot express our feelings of gratitude for your love and support.

To you, Nancy's colleagues and friends, thank you for the overwhelming amount of prayers, visits, vigils and correspondences that provided comfort in her final days.

To that remarkable hospice staff and the volunteers whose care and compassion was not just a job, but a dedication, thank you.

To sisters Maeve and Julia whose many visits and vigils brought Nancy peace and serenity during her final days, a very special "God Bless".

Each and every one of you were the "wind beneath her wings" during Nancy's transition to her new life. Thank you!

I'd like to share a story with you.

At the end of my third grade school year at PS 6 in Cliffside Park our teacher invited those of us with pets to take them to school the following day and parade them around the ballfield adjacent to our school. The following day my eager classmates proudly displayed their family pets —the conventional dogs and cats and the occasional rabbit left over from Easter along with those little turtles with painted backs that said things like "aloha!" But alas, the Haarer family had no such pets. But in my mind surely a two year old sister could qualify. So, carefully scrubbed, honey colored hair in curls, dressed in her finest pinafore and "Sunday only" shoes, hand in hand Nancy and I joined the pet parade around the school quad. I don't remember if there was a "best in show" but oh, how that little face beamed. It was Nancy's first public performance –and she enjoyed every minute of it – so did I.

And I do want to set the record straight about the ten yard field goal at Notre Dame and that left handed "hook shot" that amazed the varsity at Immaculate High. With humility and pride I must disclose that I was her mentor and coach! Our only real sports dispute was over Nancy's misguided passion for the New York Yankees.

At this point I must stop to mention two of the most influential persons in Nancy's early life. Mrs. Specht was a local artist who recognized this ten year old's artistic talent and provided her with the essentials that guided her throughout her life. Sister Marie Imelda was instrumental in Nancy's vocational choice when she was at Epiphany Parish and later here at St. E's. They remained the best of friends.

How to define Nancy. What are the motivations and drives of someone who devoted sixty-one years to God, her community and the arts?

In reflection, the poem "Clothes of Heaven" by William Butler Yeats came to mind – and if you'll indulge me I'd like to recite it for you.

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

I think these words provide a good introduction to and reflection of Nancy's lifetime aspirations.

Her faith – in God’s promise of an eternal life – and her understanding that death is, in reality, spiritual birth.

Her hope – that her talents would benefit the community at St. Elizabeth’s – that those talents would further glorify the vision of Mother Seton and Mother Xavier – the subjects of many of her art and sculpture creations.

Her love – of her colleagues here at St. E’s, her students, our family, friends of the greater community, and art in its many dimensions. I would suggest that Nancy succeeded in raising art to a new level – that she “sanctified art” as dramatically displayed throughout this campus. In return she asked humbly “tread softly on my dreams”.

Nancy believed in angels. I first saw it when, at four or five she joined her tiny friends and waved her arms in a blanket of snow – I know you did it too. I saw it when she fashioned a two foot angel from a single block of cedar. She expressed her belief in the words of a favorite poem:

“Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we saw angels where there were only clouds....”

Yes, Nancy believed in angels – “Something good in everything she saw.”

“Tread softly on my dreams” she asked of us.

Finally, Nancy sought out epiphanies of beauty in God’s gift of nature that surrounded her – particularly the magic of seasonal change expressed in “Seasons of Learning”, those three panels that grace the atrium of Annunciation Center. The absence of a fourth panel invites us to view nature’s beauty thru the adjacent glass windows – the expanse of hills, greenery and wildlife that created for Nancy “The Echo of Creation”. I think that Nancy would agree that “Seasons of Learning” was the perfection of her “Dream” and her gift to the rest of us.

“Tread softly” she said.

A familiar song goes:

“We had joy, we had fun  
We had seasons in the sun  
But the wine and the song  
Like the seasons are all gone.”

But maybe, just maybe, Nancy’s “seasons” have just begun – that her “peace out of pain” is a reminder to all of us that “for everything there is a season” – that there is a time to mourn and a time to dance.

Maybe, just maybe, that glow of happiness in the eyes of a two year old as she paraded around a school playground many years ago, and her gift of the seasons on display in Annunciation Center – are two arcs that have joined to complete Nancy’s circle of life.

For Nancy it is time to dance.

Don Haarer  
(Brother of Sister Nancy Anne)