

REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF SISTER JEANNE ELLEN MORRIS **February 5, 1927—July 29, 2016**



Welcome to our celebration of the life of our Sister Jeanne Ellen and our farewell to her. A very special welcome to all the nieces, nephews, grand nieces and nephews who have joined us during these last two days. You know we sisters are long-livers and often by the time one of us dies all of our relatives have gone before us. Of course, our religious family is always there to celebrate with us. Thanks you so much.

The readings of today's liturgy reflect the thoughts of Sister Jeanne Ellen as she walked through this life of service and commitment. She knew well that her life here was to be lived fully for those she served. They represented for her the face of Christ. She walked daily with the strong hope of spending the life we all hope to achieve with the God who called her to service as a Sister of Charity.

Perhaps in a rather light way she shared this understanding that her time on earth was only a shadow of what was to come when one day in the chancery office she said to her secretary, "You must come to my funeral. Our funerals are always beautiful." Her secretary replied not to think about the funeral, but she insisted, "You must come. Our funerals are beautiful." Thank you, Gerry Bigham, for accepting her invitation. Welcome. I am sure she is happy you are here.

Lois Audrey Morris, daughter of Ginevra Keating and Warren Morris, was born on February 5, 1927 in Pittsburgh, PA and baptized in Saint Scholastica Church, Aspinwall, on February 20, 1927. She attended Saint Philomena elementary school. Here she made a lifelong friend. The story is that she and Jeanne Ellen Gannon skipped to school each day. She attended Sacred Heart

High School. Then she enrolled in Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) and received a bachelor of science degree in 1949 in secretarial studies and English. During her time in college she worked as a secretary every summer. Then she was employed full time as an executive secretary for the International Nickel Company for four years.

Audrey entered the Sisters of Charity from Saint Philomena Parish on September 8, 1953 and when she received the habit on June 27, 1954, she was given the name Sister Jeanne Ellen, a name she requested to honor her dear friend from kindergarten. Her friend died just a few weeks ago, so we remember her today as well.

Thinking back to our novitiate days, I imagine that it was a rather difficult transition for this young woman who had brought to the community some serious life experience and sophistication. She had to learn a new way of life as she joined her group, many of whom were new high school graduates.

Sister Jeanne Ellen knew she held her treasure in an earthen vessel. She continued to search throughout her life to give herself fully to ministry while striving to deepen her life with the God she held dear.

After teaching business and a few other subjects for several years, she moved into the role of guidance counselor and received a master's degree in education guidance and counseling from Duquesne University. It seems that Sister Jeanne Ellen was called to be a counselor for all. She served as facilitator of cases for the matrimonial tribunal of the Diocese of Greensburg from 1981 until 1993. Her family claims she was the family counselor. Her friends valued the time she gave to them and many students claim that she made a significant difference in their lives. A few of her students from St. Anselm High School have joined us today as a testament to her presence in their lives.

Sister Jeanne Ellen wrote on her application that she wanted to come to religious life to grow close to God and to achieve the highest degree of religious perfection that she could. Throughout her long life within the community she continued this journey. It was not always an easy one. She struggled with the changes in community following the Vatican Council. She expressed deep concerns about prayer life and commitment. Back problems nagged her and her legs eventually caused serious pain and discomfort. Additionally, she lost all of her immediate family to death. However, her independence and straightforwardness kept her on her journey.

The reading from Corinthians today reminded us, “We are afflicted in every way, but not constrained; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed...” and “so death is at work in us, but life in you ...” and “knowing that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and place us with you in his presence.”

Relieved now of the need to push her wheelchair or have her legs bound in dressings, may Sister Jeanne Ellen now rest in the arms of the Lord she came to serve.

*Funeral Liturgy Reflection
Sister Louise Grundish, SC
August 1, 2016*