

Reflection for Sister Catherine Meinert



Catherine, Woman of the Church, How Great is your Legacy: Catherine, Woman of Compassion and Care, How great is your faith; Catherine, Woman of the Church, well-spring of integrity! Rich as these epitaphs are, they just scratch the surface of who Catherine is for me – for us as friends – for us as Sisters of Charity!

Catherine, will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known, will you let my life be grown in you and in me?

Catherine lovingly heard and heeded God's summons to be daughter; Sister; friend; Sister of Charity; Administrator; Teacher and Patient. Her summons to be "Family" was a special touchstone for her and her extended family, especially Bea, her best friend and soul-mate, her cousin Gracie, who welcomed Catherine to eternity, and her nieces, nephews and cousins. This love of "Family" was again evident when she established the "Celebrate Your Family" Program in Pittsburgh as a way to emphasize the primacy of family in the lives of children and adults. Her love for and interaction with people gives us a deeper glimpse into who Catherine is/was far more than the degrees and acclamations she ever earned. She received the following note after she was awarded the Oakland Catholic Leading Lady Award: "Thank you for your leadership and for serving as a role model to our current students. And thank you for your support of Oakland Catholic and the Formation of Future Female Leaders."

Catherine, “Will you use the Faith you found to reshape the world around...in you and me?”

Her love, compassion, and empathy for children and the marginalized gave her the impetus to work closely with the Alternatives Yes! program for poor mothers and families long after she left Connellsville.

Catherine, “Will you come and follow me if I but call your name...and never be the same?”

When we entered on September 8, 1961, we were at one time 38 strong – and now we are the remnant of 7! I'm sure Catherine was warmly welcomed into eternity by Sister Louise DePaul, our senior who asked Catherine: “What took you so long?” Over the years our love and friendship has deepened and we refer to Catherine as “Our Catherine!” I am honored to call her “Friend!” She enjoyed a good game of Phase 10 and was a sharp player who loved going down – and out simultaneously – leaving the rest of us holding a handful of cards!

“Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name. Let me turn and follow you and never be the same...”

Catherine got to know and love Mother Aloysia from what she read and learned about our foundress. She learned that they were kindred spirits and I believe Catherine turned to her for spiritual and community direction, which led to a friendship that was celebrated as Catherine entered eternity.

As we heard the scriptures and hymns that Catherine chose months ago, we are given a privileged glimpse of the loving relationship that God and she shared. Catherine said: “I believe I was called by our Lord to be a Sister of Charity. The call was not accompanied but a trumpet blast or an extraordinary experience; rather, it was a growing conviction that this is what God wants of me.” And for Catherine... **“Remember that God is ever present”** was not merely words – but – was the lived reality of her everyday life. She shared: “God is a ‘presence’ in my

life. I know he is with me..." This is so evident in the readings and hymns she chose - and in her beautiful 'heart-smile' that always warmed our hearts. I want to end with a section from Colossians 3:12-17 as written in "The Message" by Eugene H. Peterson: "So, - chosen by God for this new life of love, Catherine, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you... **wear love. It's your basic all-purpose garment.** A garment fit for your wedding feast with Jesus!"

Thank you, Catherine, for being such a special part of our lives. Enjoy eternity – and your conversations with Jesus and Aloysia.

Written by: Sister Kathleen McCauley