

REFLECTION FOR THE FUNERAL OF SISTER BRIGID MARIE GRANDEY

September 2, 1934 – July 25, 2024



As I begin this reflection, I want to thank Sister Maureen O'Brien for trusting me to offer these words in her place as Sister Brigid Marie named her to offer her reflection. As Sister Maureen left for Korea to attend the General Chapter she felt certain that Sister Brigid Marie would be waiting for her return. On her last visit with Brigid before leaving, Brigid shared with her that she could no longer see to read or watch T.V., her hearing was diminished and she could no longer walk about easily. She observed that the one thing left for her was to reflect God's presence.

How does one prepare to remind those present of the deep thinker, wise teacher, devoted religious, avid reader, and faithful friend?

In the years before Sister Brigid Marie entered the community, her family moved several times as her father's jobs changed. Because of this, Brigid and her brother Dick attended several different elementary schools Saint Rose in

Girard, Ohio, Saint Cecelia in Rochester, Pennsylvania, Saint Patrick in Cumberland, Maryland, and Saint Michael in Frostburg, Maryland. She believed this prepared her for many moves, and different opportunities.

She attended Sacred Heart high School in Pittsburgh and graduated in June 1952 with High Honor. She admitted she would have had highest honor but chemistry was her nemesis and she confessed she merely made a C.

A woman with a Bachelor of Arts, two Masters of Arts in Theology and English, and a Master of Education in School Administration, she taught and administered schools and served on numerous Boards in schools, social centers, Seton Hill University, and the Sisters of Charity.

While all of these accomplishments help us to know some aspects of the life of Sister Brigid Marie, I am now going to spend a few minutes to share some of her unique gifts, talents, virtues, and personality traits that help to make this Sister of Charity unique and special, one who touched many lives in special ways.

Sister Brigid Marie maintained a deep connection with her parents and brother. As the years moved on she cared for her aging parents with particular love and concern. Although, never leaving her work in ministry she moved in with her father for his last couple of years, kept his home spotless, and prepared his meals. She also helped her parents move from Rochester, NY to

Wilkinsburg and was a loving and devoted daughter. She shared her family with her sister companions and many dinners and events were shared together.

Sister Brigid Marie made deep friendships with many of her sisters. She entertained them, traveled with them, and shared her love of new beginnings, unique places, travel and adventure. She had friends to accompany her on trips to Alaska, Ireland, and other places. She almost made it to visit all of the 48 States.

Brigid wrote in her biography: I have been to every state in the United States except Mississippi, Alabama, and Hawaii. I didn't see much of Washington, and Oregon. I have been to Alaska, Canada, Mexico, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Northern Italy and France. Brigid also traveled to South Korea in 2002 to attend the first General Chapter when we became two provinces. During that time, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the founding of Saint Joseph School.

She also joined in large community events, chapters, and meetings on the concerns of the day. If there was, a meeting or community event Brigid was always present eager to learn and ready to offer her wisdom and suggestions.

She loved learning new things and sharing meals and parties. However, she was not a fan of health foods. Over vegetables, she preferred sweets, especially chocolate cakes with icing and good ice cream. Sister Brigid also believed on being on time for all events. However, she did not believe in coming early. She arrived the exact time an event was to occur. If the organizer began a few seconds ahead. She was quick to show her displeasure.

As Brigid moved from one activity to another, she entered each with vigor and quiet excitement. Her greatest joy was teaching young high school students and admiring their creativity, joy and excitement to learn new things. In her last position as one operating the learning center at Seton-LaSalle High School, Sister Brigid Marie helped many students overcome blocks to reading, writing, and fears of failure. During the first year in this position at Seton LaSalle, she helped one of my young cousins to study and organize. He spent all of his high school years volunteering and assisting other students to find their way to academic success.

These last few years have been difficult for Sister Brigid. Her hearing diminished, her eyes blind, her walking difficult until she could no longer ambulate without assistance. She struggled to understand and accept these limitations. However, with a deep sense of God's presence in her life and her sincere commitment to her life as a Sister of Charity she found the grace to hand these losses over to God who had given her many gifts and opportunities to serve. She rested in God's arms.

We are here today to offer our prayers for Sister Brigid as she journeys to Heaven to experience the ultimate joy and peace of God's abiding love. Hopefully, she will remember her many friends and students and help each of us find our home in God's kingdom.

As Brigid completed her Biography, she took her journal to an annual retreat in August 2010 to fill in the blanks. She wrote: "I have added some things but all in all what is here is what I want to say."

"In his will is our peace." A quote from Elizabeth Ann Seton.

Dear Brigid, may you rest in God's eternal love and peace.

- *Sister Louise Grundish, SC*