



Eulogy of Sister Mary Therese Freymann, BVM (Marcina)
St. Eulalia Catholic Church, Maywood, Ill., July 8, 2019

Good morning. It is good to be together to celebrate the life of Mary Therese Freymann.

Mary Therese was born on Dec. 11, 1934, to Aloysius Peter and Leone Clara Belken Freymann of Dubuque, Iowa. The family was complete when younger sister Joan was born. Mary Therese and family moved to Milwaukee where she attended Holy Angels Academy and she met the BVM sisters. Mary Therese entered the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Sept. 8, 1952, and received the name Marcina. She professed her first vows on March 19, 1953, and final vows on July 16, 1960.

Mary Therese followed in a long line of family members who entered the BVM community including Sister Mary Zita Fahey, the sister-in-law of her great grandfather. Sister Mary Rita entered in 1885 and likely knew several of our founding sisters. The family of BVMs also included five first cousins of her grandmother, two first cousins of her father and two second cousins, including Sister Carol Spiegel, BVM. Mary Therese's family is very important to her still. Her own many nieces and nephews and cousins have travelled here today to celebrate her life.

Mary Therese attended Clarke College, now University, in Dubuque, Iowa, and received a degree in Sociology/History in 1966. She completed her formal education in 1977, receiving an MA in sociology from Northern Illinois.

Her ministry began as a primary teacher in Grayslake, Ill. For four years, she actually taught not in Illinois, but in Emmetsburg Iowa. She moved back to Illinois to begin a long career teaching at St. Eulalia's until 2007. During that time, Mary Therese taught 7th and 8th grades and became a technology coordinator. As schools merged, Mary Therese continued as a technology coordinator at Our Lady of the Westside School, Children of Peace School and St. Agatha Catholic Academy until 2016.

In 1977, Mary Therese celebrated her 25th Jubilee at St. Eulalia's where then pastor and friend Fr. William Quinn said of her: "[Mary Therese] can drive every motorized vehicle invented from a tractor on up . . . She has been a member of the parish council . . . [and a] member of the Archdiocesan team assisting parishes in the Chicago area with their parish councils. She has lectured on Afro-American history and has been a member of the ecumenical discussion group based at the Congregational Church at Oak Park." Fr. Quinn goes on to say "As pastor I feel indebted to her for her breadth and enthusiasm of her work in the parish and, personally, I thank her for her staunch friendship these past ten years."

Mary Therese's largest impact in education was in the area of technology. In the article "Chicago Area Schools Enter the Technology Age," she was credited with bringing technology to the inner city schools. In the article, Mary Therese says, "I'll take anything and try to get it working" The article says "her can do attitude has helped the school (Children of Peace school), which six years ago had no computers, into a technology rich learning community."

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, they shall be satisfied." John Dear writes, "[This] speaks of the pursuit of universal social, economic, racial and political justice that God demands of us." Mary

Therese believed that inner city school students deserved an education rich in technology as much as the wealthier schools. She referred to this as the digital divide. She also believed that teachers needed to learn the technology as well, and set out to teach them. Mary Therese achieved these advances in technology through grants and help from organizations such as Big Shoulders. Some people suffer martyrdom in pursuit of justice; Mary Therese suffered through grant writing. She was the one who would do what she could to bridge that digital divide.

In 1997, the Citizen Ambassador Program of People to People International invited Mary Therese to be part of a team of education technology professionals. She went to South Africa, again to help teachers learn how technology can be used in the classroom. While helping teachers and students at many schools in the Chicago area, and around the world, she also helped BVM friends and her neighbors at the McHugh apartments with their technology needs.

When asked how she wanted to be remembered, Mary Therese responded "as an educator". I believe she achieved that goal. Yet she was more than an educator. I don't think Mary Therese ever met a stranger. So many of her students became lifelong friends. I took her to an AT&T store to do something with her phone and the worker there came running outside to give her a hug. She had been there once before. For the homeless, she kept a bag of goodies in her car at all times. One homeless man remembered her bag as it had hand lotion in it. Something he had never received. I observed her at various healthcare facilities. She knew the names of every individual who cared for her and usually their family history. When I would call and ask how she was doing, I would usually get "Well, I went to the doctor today and the sweetest nurse took care of me and I taught her cousin." I had to remind her I was asking about her. When I received the call from the nurse on the night she died, that nurse said, "I wish the day shift had a chance to know her," and she was crying. This nurse knew Mary Therese for less than 8 hours.

Mary Therese's grin - as if she was up to something - was with her until she went to God. Her body gave out, but her spirit lives on. May you be at peace Mary Therese as you join your family, BVM sisters and countless friends in heaven. Pray for us to help us bridge the justice divide.