



**Eulogy of Sister Maureen (Wenefride) Sheehan, BVM**  
Marian Hall Chapel, June 4, 2020

Good morning and welcome to the celebration of the life of our Sister Maureen Sheehan, BVM.

Maureen Sheehan was born in San Francisco on Aug. 26, 1938, to Daniel and Winifred (Ryan) Sheehan. Her father was an immigrant from County Cork, Ireland, and her mother was a native of San Francisco. Brother Daniel completed the family. The Sheehan family lived only a block from St. Paul Parish where Maureen attended elementary and high school. Growing up in the Sheehan family, Maureen developed her signature wit, a love of Irish culture, and possibly, a love of politics. Growing up in the St. Paul Parish, Maureen developed the strong life values of personal integrity and service to others.

Maureen entered the BVM congregation on Sept. 8, 1956. She received the name of SM Wenefride in honor of her mother upon her reception on March 19, 1957. She professed first vows on Feb. 3, 1959, and then completed her bachelor's degree in mathematics at Mundelein College, Chicago, in 1961. She professed final vows on July 16, 1964.

Maureen served as a teacher and an administrator for 25 years in our BVM schools. Her first mission was at Xavier High School in Phoenix, where she taught religion and mathematics. She then transferred to Bishop Diego HS in Santa Barbara, Calif. After eight additional years in the classroom, Maureen completed her master's in educational psychology at the University of California in 1972 and returned to Bishop Diego HS as principal. In 1974, she returned to northern California and served as principal at St. Vincent High School in Petaluma.

In 1986, Maureen went to study for a year at the School of Applied Theology in Oakland, Calif., to earn her certificate in ministry. For the next 25 years, she was the pastoral associate for liturgy at Saints Simon and Jude Parish in Huntington Beach, Calif. Maureen appreciated that the Franciscan Friars led this large, vibrant parish with strong stands on social justice issues, quality liturgy, and interactive parishioners. When she participated in liturgy at the parish, she would wear an *alb* as her mode of dress so that she fit in with the friars. Maureen taught adult confirmation and Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults classes and developed a specialty in marriage counseling. She became very adept in assisting couples to prepare their petitions for the Diocese of Orange Marriage Tribunal and obtained nullification in a very timely manner. For her, *life* was interesting *all* of the time. Parishioners and BVMs celebrated Maureen's 50th Jubilee at Simon and Jude with Maureen giving the homily at the mass.

In 2006, after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Maureen joined an eight-member diocesan pilgrimage team that traveled from the California Coast to the Gulf Coast to support local parishes in New Orleans and Biloxi. The Orange Diocese had collected over \$1.5 million to share in relief effort with parish teams. Bringing a message of hope and caring, the California team spent four days visiting local church communities who were determined to keep the faith alive in the midst of uncertainty and physical devastation. Maureen found that the sharing between the two communities was a moving tribute to Catholic faith and hope. It was a graced experience.

In 2012, Maureen retired from Saints Simon and Jude Parish and returned to the San Francisco area. She made this move intentionally because she wanted to get to know her family better, especially her five nephews and

their families. Maureen loved to go to the kids' ball games and family barbecues and was pleased that she had the time to spend with them and share that "Sheehan wit." Her outreach ministry for her last seven years was with the Franciscans at St. Boniface Parish in the San Francisco Tenderloin District, where she volunteered at the famous St. Anthony Dining Room. This established dining service for the poor and the needy has provided meals free of charge for the past 70 years.

Maureen lived as a BVM for 63 years. Although she lived most of her life in California, she took pride in the BVM Congregation. From *Salt* editorial board, Community Board, Senate committee work, and most recently the Governance Study Group (GSG), Maureen brought her keen thinking, judgment and wit to congregational work and teams.

In her final months, Maureen carefully prepared for her move to Mount Carmel, choosing St. Patrick's Day as a notable day for travel. Missing the mark, by three days, Maureen was at peace with the change.

Today, we pray,

*Oh loving God, we send your daughter home to you,  
home to a place of everlasting love,  
to join there with the angel choirs and blessed saints,  
and to behold your glorious holy face.*