



## **Eulogy of Sister Richard Ann Quilter, BVM** Caritas Studio, July 24, 2020

Good morning. It is good to be together to celebrate the life for our Sister Richard Ann Quilter.

Harriet Marie Quilter entered this world on June 7, 1925, as the only daughter of Richard and Ann (Tracy) Quilter of Chicago. Her mother, a kind and loving person, was born in County Carlow, Ireland. Her father was a captain with the Chicago Fire Department. She had an older brother Richard who also served as a Chicago firefighter and retired as the 6th Division's fire marshal. He died in 2008. Richard and Harriet were later joined by their brother John who died in 2001, and James (Jim), who survives. Harriet was very fond of her brothers. In later years, she greatly enjoyed catching up with Jim during his weekly call.

Harriet attended Our Lady of the Angels Grade School and The Immaculata High School. She knew she wanted to be a BVM sister in first grade while daydreaming about ringing the bells that woke up the sisters. Harriet entered the congregation on Sept. 8, 1945, received the name Richard Ann upon her reception on March 19, 1946, professed her first vows on March 19, 1948, and lived 74 years as a BVM.

John the Evangelist wrote, "See what love has been bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are." (1 John 3:1). With deep awareness of God's love for her, Richard Ann enthusiastically and abundantly shared this love with the little ones she so dearly loved to teach for 48 years. Her first mission was kindergarten at Gesu in Milwaukee, which was followed by first, second and third grades at Holy Family in Mason City, Iowa, and second grade at Holy Redeemer in Montrose, Calif. In 1967, she returned to Chicago to teach first grade, initially at St. Vincent, and later at Our Lady of the Angels where she ministered for twenty years. She always spoke endearingly about OLA; it was her favorite mission. As an OLA graduate, she felt she was giving back to the community for the wonderful teachers she had and the excellent education she received there. Being greeted by her broad smile must have made the first day of school for many children a happy one. Letters of gratitude from former students praised her as a good teacher, which at times meant serving as the only positive adult role model in their lives. Richard Ann certainly paid forward the blessings she received by teaching, mentoring, and loving her little ones so well.

Richard Ann retired to St. Constance convent in 1996 and quickly assumed responsibility for running the parish Bingo games—and she loved doing it! She moved to Wright Hall when St. Constance closed in 2003 and then to Mount Carmel when Wright Hall closed in 2011. At first she went to Bingo games here at Mount Carmel, but the rules had been changed and she didn't like them. Richard Ann knew how to play Bingo and that's the way it had to be.

Although some of our sisters may take exception this, Richard Ann was the *premier* Cubs fan. Her room was filled with Cubs mementos; there was no doubt for whom she rooted. Once she proudly showed to another sister a Cubs Christmas ornament that she had purchased saying, "I certainly don't need *another* Christmas ornament, but this one is *irresistible!*" Apparently, it was. She faithfully watched every game, so these past few months without baseball must have been especially difficult. Maybe a milk chocolate Hersey bar, her favorite treat, helped to ease that disappointment at least a little.

Richard Ann once quipped, "My name is Quilter; I'm a knitter." Her mother taught her how to knit when she was young. She recalled opening a cedar chest and finding balls of yarn with which to practice. She soon discovered she had a talent for knitting and from then on always seemed to have a work in progress in her hands. When her eyesight deteriorated, she asked Sister Donard Collins to cast on for her and then once again she set to knitting. She completed over 200 afghans in her lifetime and even taught a Mount Carmel staff member how to knit.

Richard Ann was quiet and unassuming, a gentle soul, a good listener and observer, a woman of few words. Still she was engaged in life. She appreciated visiting and sharing activities with her BVM sisters. She especially enjoyed watching game shows when with friends. While living with Sisters Marion Murphy, Otilie Sana, and Cornelia Harrison at Our Lady of Angels in Chicago, the four of them enjoyed an annual vacation to the BVM house in Salem, Wis. Richard Ann stayed informed about community and world events by watching the news and reading *Salt* magazine and the *BVM Center News*. When she was no longer able to read these publications for herself, she asked Sister Helen Emerson to read them to her. Her pleasant attitude and approach to life never wavered as she consistently accepted hardships, including the physical limitations of aging.

Richard Ann was a woman of prayer and devotion. For many years she served as the sister pray-er for BVMs living in Oak Park, Ill., one of whom commented, "Richard Ann was a wonderful person to communicate with. She was always so interested in what we were doing—the perfect person to be our pray-er." Richard Ann had a great affection for our Blessed Mother and the rosary, which she prayed daily. Starting in her days as a postulant, she continued a beautiful ritual of praying a novena of rosaries for each BVM sister who died.

According to a friend, Richard Ann seemed to be concerned about moving to the new Mount Carmel Bluffs buildings and asked many questions about it. This friend commented, "Now she is in the special home the Lord has prepared for her, a home furnished with lots of joy, love and free from worry." To which we add, "And her loving God who welcomed with a tender embrace." Richard Ann, we celebrate your homecoming and hold deep gratitude in our hearts for your life of love and service and for the prayers; we know you continue to pray for us. Until we meet again, be at peace.