



**Eulogy of Sister Alice Marie (St. Gerard) Dunphy, BVM**  
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, May 7, 2021

Good morning. It is good to be here to celebrate the life of our Sister Alice Marie Dunphy.

Mention the name Alice Dunphy at Mount Carmel and a vision of a Christmas village display complete with a train set probably comes to mind. Or perhaps it's an image of the "Easter Bunny" passing out See's candy by the case. She was also famous for organizing parties to celebrate other holidays, not the least of which was St. Patrick's Day. Alice brought smiles to the faces of many young children as well as to the young at heart.

Alice Ann Dunphy was born Nov. 17, 1932, in Chicago to Gerald and Cecilia (Twohey) Dunphy. She was the seventh of eight children, three boys and five girls. In her autobiography, Alice wrote, "After a typical Irish-Catholic upbringing, I was enrolled as a shy five-year-old . . . at Our Lady Help of Christians. I had BVMs from that first day until I finished high school at St. Mary's. They made a lasting impression on me. To this day I can remember every sister who taught me, disciplined me, cared for me, and enriched my belief in God. They made their mark on my heart and soul."

While at St. Mary's, a desire to enter religious life began to surface. "During our senior year," Alice recalled, "we visited Mount Carmel. That really helped me finalize my intentions of becoming a Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

Alice entered the congregation on Sept. 8, 1951, and received the name St. Gerard upon her reception on March 19, 1952. Her father died when she was a first-year novice. Her heart was broken and she pondered withdrawing from the community to support her mother. However, while attending the funeral, she realized how proud her father was of his BVM daughter, so she journeyed on.

Alice professed her first vows on March 19, 1954, and lived 69 years as a BVM. "Becoming a religious, especially a BVM, fulfilled my dream to serve God and [others]," Alice shared. "To look into the face of another is to look into the face of God. I have lived that way during my life."

Alice ministered as an elementary teacher for 20 years. She was missioned at St. Dominic and Our Lady of Lourdes in Chicago; St. Gertrude in Stockton, Calif.; St. Paul in San Francisco; St. Ann in Butte, Mont.; Sacred Heart in Lincoln, Neb.; and Our Lady of Las Vegas. In addition, she served as both teacher and principal at St. Anthony in Missoula, Mont., and principal at St. Theresa in Palm Springs, Calif.

St. Ann was her favorite mission because, in her own words, "I had first grade with 65 young energetic lumps of clay to mold . . . Every day was a good day."

She was terribly saddened when she was reassigned back to Our Lady of Lourdes in Chicago, yet the move had positive outcomes. Alice was able to complete a bachelor's degree in history with an education minor at Mundelein College. She later earned a master's degree in education from Cardinal Stritch College in Milwaukee.

She also was selected as a master teacher at Our Lady of Lourdes and had the privilege and honor of training the Scholastics. She did her best to form them into great teachers. One very special scholastic was Sister Kathryn Bacon, who was a born teacher. A deep friendship immediately formed that lasted 45 years, 40 of which they lived together.

Alice's longest mission was her 20 years as principal at St. Theresa in Palm Springs, Calif. Alice had a knack for fundraising and spearheaded the building of a new parish activity center and a new school. It was an exciting time.

With the help and support of Kathryn, Alice transformed the troubled school, a former army barracks, into a recognized, quality Catholic school. Deservedly, Alice was named the 1993 Distinguished Principal for the Western United States by the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA).

"My style of leadership . . . focuses on open communication, a true sense of shared responsibility and empowerment within the community, my availability to each student, parent, [and] teacher . . . and fostering and challenging the gifts of our teachers and staff."

More honors were bestowed in 1997 when the NCEA Department of Elementary Schools recognized Alice's 30 years of outstanding service as a Catholic school educator and principal and the St. Theresa school library was dedicated to her honor.

Alice and Kathryn decided to leave St. Theresa that year. It was a difficult decision. For years, the pastor and parents were so grateful for their hard work that they gifted the sisters with a paid summer vacation. Through that generosity, Alice and Kathryn enjoyed beautiful weeks at San Diego Harbor Island and San Catalina Island, multiple trips to Hawaii, an Alaskan cruise through the Inland Passage, and a three-week trip to Ireland.

After a well-deserved sabbatical, Alice accepted a teaching position at Our Lady of Las Vegas, but retired the next year. Alice and Kathryn volunteered at St. Joseph Husband of Mary Parish where they were active in religious education and outreach programs. The pastor wrote, "You can be very proud of [Sister Alice Dunphy and Sister Kathryn Bacon] for their care and concern for the poor is manifest by their words and their many good deeds."

Alice moved to Mount Carmel a few months after Kathryn suddenly collapsed and died in her arms on June 24, 2010. It was an extremely difficult time in her life. She later shared, "The BVMs . . . were there to ease the pain of losing everything that I held close to my heart. With so much concern and the grace of God, I learned to live in the now. I will forever be grateful to my sisters as I hold them close to a broken heart. I love them and they have been my strength."

During her years at Mount Carmel, Alice was a member of the Sisters Development Network, which informs donors of the latest BVM news and offers prayer and support. She faithfully visited the sisters in memory care to offer compassion, companionship, and love, and received far more than she gave.

St. John of the Cross said, "In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone." "I want to believe that with my whole heart," wrote Alice. "I want to be judged by the way I lived and the way I showed concern, compassion, and love for all."

The author of Wisdom wrote, "Those who trust in God will understand the truth, those who are faithful will abide with him in love, for grace and mercy await those God has chosen." (Wisdom 3:9).

Trusting in these words, we confidently rejoice that Jesus welcomed Alice home with a loving embrace and the words, "Well done, Alice."