



**Eulogy of Sister Monica M. (St. Reginald) Lowry, BVM**  
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, Aug. 26, 2021

Good morning. It is good to be together to celebrate the life of our Sister Monica M. Lowry.

Monica Mary Lowry entered this world on April 25, 1922, in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, as the third child of Reginald and Mary Elizabeth (Bell) Lowry. Her father was born in England but had paternal roots in County Clare, Ireland. He joined the navy to fight in World War I. During this time he met Monica's mother, who was born in India but was working as a nurse.

After the war, they married and moved to British Columbia. Reginald worked as a draftsman for the Canadian government and later for a U.S. gas and electric company. He took up photography as a hobby, one that Monica inherited. Her mother was an amazing baker who sewed, canned the produce of her garden, and tended the chickens. She also was a talented storyteller. The children spent many evenings, especially in winter, encircled about her, awestruck with her wonderful tales.

Monica was welcomed by older siblings Catharine and Bernard and later joined by siblings Rosemary and Damien. Sadly, Damien died at the age of 15 months. When Monica was 5 years old, the family moved to San Francisco where the youngest, Ignatius "Nate," was born.

Monica shared, "Though we never knew grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins, our parents did all they could to celebrate birthdays, holidays, and special occasions." She recalled one special Christmas when she was 10. "Roller skates came into vogue and it was with much joy that a pair was my Christmas gift . . . We lived in the hilly area of San Francisco . . . [I] soon learned the trick of hanging onto cars as they drove up the hills."

Childhood illnesses such as mumps and measles forced the healthy as well as the sick to stay at home. Monica commented, "It was a happy day, indeed, when we got to play all our favorite games together while staying at home." The Lowrys truly were a close-knit, loving family.

Monica completed her entire elementary and secondary education at St. Paul's. She already had her heart set on becoming a BVM in eighth grade. She entered the congregation on Sept. 8, 1941, joining her sister Catharine (SM Damienne) who entered in 1938 and withdrew in 1947. Monica received the name St. Reginald upon her reception on March 19, 1942. She professed her first vows on March 19, 1944, and lived 79 years, just 19 days shy of a full 80 years, as a BVM.

Monica served an elementary school teacher for 26 years with missions at St. Dominic in Chicago; St. Francis Xavier in Council Bluffs, Iowa; St. Gertrude and Presentation in Stockton, Calif.; St. Thomas More in San Francisco; and St. Ann in Butte, Mont. She served 32 years as principal, including six years at St. Ann in Butte; five years at Christ the King in Seattle; and 21 years at Presentation in Stockton, Calif.

As superior-principal at St. Ann, she adjusted to the informality of the Butte people and won the respect of a difficult pastor. She was very supportive of the teachers and created a pleasant, easy-going atmosphere in the

convent. She felt it was important for the sisters to experience all the beauty and history of Montana and loved to spend time in the mountains whenever parishioners offered a cabin.

With experience under her belt, her mission as principal at Christ the King was an opportunity to mentor a first-time principal at a nearby BVM mission. She patiently explained diocesan procedures, served as a travel companion to meetings, and provided a good listening ear.

“Teaching and administration in Catholic schools has been my life’s work,” shared Monica. “The challenges have been exhilarating, exciting, and indeed, fulfilling in many ways. Though at times stressful and even frustrating, teaching children and observing their growth is always a delight . . . To ‘teach as Jesus taught’ has been my goal.”

In 1995, Monica received the Marian Award for Adult Leadership in Education given by the Diocese of Stockton, which noted that “[her] administrative qualities exemplify growth toward academic excellence, a strong sense of faith community, and an authentic reflection of Catholic philosophy of education.” She was especially commended as “a caring and courageous Christian leader who has helped . . . lead youth to responsible adulthood.”

Her regional wrote, “What a blessing you are for the students, faculty, and parents! It doesn’t take a former principal too long to sense a warm, caring atmosphere with a focus on learning. Your school has it! In addition, your deep respect for each child and faculty member is very evident. Thank you for being so faithful to our BVM mission.”

During Monica’s retirement celebration in 1996, the president of Presentation Parish Board also sang her praises. “Thank you for being the wonderful person that you are. You are an inspiration . . . You are honest, straightforward, and a woman of integrity . . . Thank you for being the kind of principal that our children look to for guidance . . . You are also a woman of great faith. . . . While others merely talk about faith, you live it.”

After retiring, Monica filled her days with reading, playing solitaire on the computer and staying in touch with her family. When asked if she was involved in any activities, she replied, “No, Love, I’m retired.” Monica called everyone “Love.”

She was a doer, but never boasted about her accomplishments. She surrounded others with her spirit of positive thinking, leaving quite an impression. She brought joy and numerous blessings into the lives of many and renewed their faith simply by seeing the way she lived her faith. She was wonderful person and a friend to all.

St. Paul counseled, “Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.” (Romans 12:11-12). This is exactly how Monica lived her life.

After receiving a cancer diagnosis in 2002, she moved to Mount Carmel, along with her housemates Jameselle Keane and Jane Dolan, and outlived them by a dozen years, which included several amazing recoveries from hospice. Severe hearing loss made interaction with others difficult, yet she was always gracious and expressed gratitude for every kindness no matter how small. Using large print devotionals, she faithfully studied and prayed with Scripture until her final days.

“I have had the great and happy privilege of living with many prayer-filled, competent, and joyous women, of meeting many fine, dedicated teachers, many faith-filled and wonderful church ministers and parishioners, countless loving and beautiful youngsters, as well as numerous trusting, supportive, generous, and caring parents. As a Sister of Charity, I have been blessed by God beyond measure with good health, much happiness, and a peaceful and joy-filled life.”

We rejoice for Monica, now reunited with her parents, siblings, set members, and many, many dear friends in the presence of her loving God who surely greeted her with open arms and the words, "Welcome home, Love!"