

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Margaret Mary Flinn

(Sister Helen Augusta)

BORN: November 1932

ENTERED CONGREGATION: February 12, 1952

DIED: October 17, 2007

THANK you for gathering here with us today to celebrate the life of Sister Margaret Mary Flinn. We extend a special welcome to her sister Shirley, her brothers Jim and Gerry, as well as her nieces, nephews, and other members of her family and friends.

Margaret Mary was born in November 1932 in Cincinnati, and welcomed into the home of Joseph and Margaret Louise Freudenberg Flinn. She was the second-oldest in a family of six children.

Since her older brother and one other brother died very early in life, Margaret Mary grew up as the oldest of the children and frequently assisted her parents with family responsibilities. Her brothers and sister have fond and appreciative memories of her great care and concern for them. Margaret Mary described these experiences as a “delight and gift from God.” But this natural goodness didn’t keep the siblings from time they spent together being “partners in mischief.” On one occasion when Margaret Mary was in charge, her sister swallowed a peach stone; when the big sister called the doctor she was given the advice “not to worry, it will pass.”

Margaret Mary graduated from Regina High School in Norwood, Ohio, in 1951 and entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood in February 1952 at the age of 19. She had been inspired and mentored by Sister Barbara Webkin, her chemistry teacher. Her father also laid groundwork for her religious vocation, probably un-

consciously, for Margaret Mary speaks of him as instilling in her an appreciation of nature as the manifestation of God’s love. Her mother nurtured her calling by being, in Margaret Mary’s words, a “woman of faith with great inner strength, intuition and resourcefulness.”

Congregational ministry was varied for Margaret Mary. After early years dedicated to domestic arts, she went on to minister as a licensed practical nurse and then a registered nurse. She served at Marian Hall in Flint, Mich.; at Kneipp Springs in Rome City, Ind.; Reid Hospital in Richmond, Ind.; and at the Milwaukee Regional Mental Health Complex in Milwaukee. In the Dayton area she ministered at Grandview Hospital, Covenant House Jewish Home, Dayton State Hospital, and at Salem Heights.

Concerning Margaret Mary’s quality of service, one employer wrote: “You were highly complimented on your excellent care by your director. I am very proud to have such professional, caring nurses on our team. Thank you for upholding the image we strive to maintain.”

In addition to her nursing, Margaret Mary was also a certified master teacher of Reiki and a licensed medical massage practitioner. Her pursuit of knowledge was unending.

Sister Margaret Mary’s plans to offer massage as a retirement ministry were thwarted by physical conditions. After she recovered from a partial hip replacement on Aug. 29, 2006, it was determined that a knee replacement was also needed. Despite her

efforts, she was unable to regain her strength after this surgery. Many tests to determine a cause for the continued weakness she experienced were inconclusive. Then, on July 5, 2007, a muscle biopsy revealed the presence of ALS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig’s disease. Hearing this devastating information, Margaret Mary wrote on a note pad — she could no longer speak clearly — “I can handle this.” And she did.

Everyone who entered her room at Emma would comment on her beautiful welcoming smile, by now her only means of communicating with most people. But this was also so very much like Margaret Mary. Not being able to talk simply reminded all those who visited her of her quiet, unassuming presence that she had practiced among us for so long. Her smile reflected her inner beauty.

Margaret Mary’s surrender to her path of suffering was most inspirational as she united it with the sufferings of Jesus, evidenced by a picture of the thorn-crowned Jesus hanging across from her bed and her many references of willingness to accept her condition.

Freed now from the confines of her body, she is enjoying the fruits of Jesus’ redeeming love — her place in God’s house.

Margaret Mary, enjoy your freedom as you experience the fruits of your perseverance.

—Sister Madonna Ratermann