Good Morning! I would like to welcome everyone to the Mass of Christian Burial for our Sr. Anna Theresa Sheridan, better to known to all of us as Anna. In particular, I want to express our gratitude to Fr. Dominic for being the celebrant of this liturgy. We are always grateful to our Franciscan Friars for being present to us at all times. (Thank you, Dominic)

There have been many significant dates and events in Anna’s life, but the two most important are her birth on November 29, 1917 and her death on October 5, 2020. Etched on her grave stone between those two dates will be a dash which signifies how Anna lived, loved and spent her life – and it was a full one – almost 103 years!

So let’s look at her dash-

Anna was the third of eight children born to Edward and Mary Sheridan in the small town of Clinton in central Massachusetts. She was blessed with four sisters – Nora, Mary, Jeannette and Eleanor and three brothers – Edward, John and Austin. We now know where Anna’s religious name, Edward John, originated – after her dad, Edward, and her brother, John, who died shortly after birth.

Anna attended the public schools in Clinton and continued her education at Becker Business College in Worcester, MA which prepared her for the business world. Ten years later in 1949, she attended the Forsyth Dental Clinic for Children in Boston, Mass, but she was still unsettled.

In February 1952, at the age of 34 she responded to God’s call to a religious vocation and entered the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and was received in August of the same year. Seven years later she professed her final vows.

Anna served 30 years as an educator in our congregational schools along the east coast from New York to Florida. In 1981, she journeyed back to Western New York and continued in the field of education as a librarian in St. John and Archbishop Walsh Schools in Olean. This continued to give her the opportunity to be with young children which she thoroughly enjoyed. I can attest to her intense joy as I was principal at St. John’s at that time and many are the happy tales she told us.

Anna was multi-talented so she put her business skills to use and ministered in the Motherhouse Treasury until 1999 at which time she formally retired and enjoyed the many activities that were planned for our senior Sisters.

There are many wonderful stories about Anna that our Nursing Staff can tell. She loved her Pepsi, ice cream, candy, bacon and potato chips. I recall a couple years ago at the end of a Super Bowl Party, the nurse was preparing her to go upstairs and her response was holding up a can of soda “No, I have to finish my Pepsi”. What a wonderful ad that would have been!

Anna was fiercely independent up to a few months ago. She walked with assistance, fed herself and was aware of everyone around her. I’m told she did have a bit of a naughty side and spoke her mind – sometimes in colorful language. But she also had a very loveable side as she asked you to “come here” followed by “give me a kiss” or “give me a hug”. She is already missed by the staff to whom we say “thank you” for all the care and compassion you shared with Anna.

And last but not least, her dash was filled with abounding love she had for her family and they had for her. Her family had (and still have) a summer home in Rye Beach, NH where Anna enjoyed many celebrations with her parents and siblings. This tradition continued with the next generation of Sheridan’s and Anna spent her summer vacation in the family homestead. Her nieces and nephews along with their families have deep affection for Anna and when she was no longer able to travel they came to Allegany, by Jet Blue, usually around her birthday. They were great celebrations even though as the visit wore on Anna would let them know very straight forward “You can go now – I’m tired.”

After almost 103 years, Anna was tired and she let go and returned to her God at 3:15 AM Monday morning. Anna, your dash was filled in so many ways of living the Gospel in the Franciscan tradition. And so we say – “Well done, good and faithful servant. Go in peace and enjoy your heavenly reward!

Mary Lou Lafferty, OSF

10/7/20