Introduction to Sr. Anne Clare’s Eulogy

By Sr. Elaine Cote, OSF

Welcome, Fr. Dominic, Anne Clare’s family by birth and by adoption, sisters in Community, friends, and former students. It is good to be here today.

Eulogy

A few years ago, Anne Clare asked me to do her Eulogy. She said, “I am asking you now so you can have time to think of some nice things to say about me!” My problem was condensing all the nice things I remember about her, so let us begin!

On September 6, 1920, exactly 101 years ago today, little Frances Gallagher made her entrance into the world. At the time when she to be was born, her mother was playing cards at a neighbor’s house. Luckily, she was able to get to the hospital on time. Anne Clare later loved to tell that story that she broke up a card game! Maybe that is why she became such a great card player!

Anne Clare was the second daughter born to Mabel and Jim Gallagher. Five more girls were to follow. Sadly, two who were part of a set of triplets and one that was only three months old did not survive. That left four Gallagher girls who remained close all their lives. The oldest sister, Agnes, is looking forward to her 102nd birthday in October. The other Gallagher girls all lived into their nineties.

Anne Clare was her father’s “son”! She was much better with a hammer and nails rather than a needle and thread. She received her love of music and dancing from her dad. From her mother, she received her quick wit. An example of Mrs. Gallagher’s wit is the story Anne Clare told me. She said she was home on vacation and her mother was telling her what to do. Finally, Anne Clare said, “Mom, Lincoln freed the slaves!” Without hesitation, her mother said, “But he forgot you!”

Anne Clare entered the Allegany Franciscans at age 24 and spent the next 76 years living their charism and serving God’s people.

She loved her years in education. She felt it was important to know her students and also their families. This was a very good idea. Of all her years in teaching, the children and families from St. Patrick’s in Buffalo remained forever in her heart!

In 1964 at the age of 44, Anne Clare was involved in a very serious automobile accident which left her with chronic and painful hip problems. During the next 56 years, she had multiple total hip replacements. As soon as she was healed she was right back to her varied ministries. She was the administrator of our Retreat House in Alden, NY, Local Minister in one of our Houses of Retirement, Principal, and many other ministries where she continued her loving service to others.

In the late 1970s, Anne Clare decided that she wanted to learn sign language. She enrolled herself in one of the local high schools in So. Jersey for a sign language class. She quickly got involved in the deaf community. They held their meetings at the convent and they were the quietest group that ever met there. No one was verbally talking-they were all talking in sign having a great time!

Anne Clare was color blind-not in the literal sense but in the sense that she did not care who you were, what you looked like, or how you dressed, the only thing she saw was your “heart”! Her mantra throughout her whole life was: “What is right is right, what is wrong is wrong,” and “Go with the flow unless the flow needs to be changed.”

I recently received in Anne Clare’s own words, what she thought would hopefully be her legacy- “My legacy would be a wonderful thread of caring, giving a good example, and by living the Gospel life. Our Franciscan Sisters have influenced my entire being so I say my legacy in the Allegany Franciscan family would be to love nature, to see children as ‘cherubs’, so innocent, and to open my heart to everyone.”

I might say that we could add that she would want to be remembered by her warm smile, her huge hugs, and simply being remembered as loving us.

“When through one woman, a little more love and goodness, a little more light and truth comes into this world, that woman’s life has had meaning.”

-Alfred Delph, S.J.

Anne Clare, Thanks for all the memories. And remember us as loving you!

To sum up Anne Clare’s life in one sentence! She loved her God, the Blessed Mother, all the Saints and Angels, her family, religious community, friends, and simply loving her life and all who were a part of it!