**Eulogy for Sr. Ann Kelly OSF**

**August 21, 2021**

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to say a few words about our Aunt.

To the kids in the family, my brothers Paul and Philip , my sister Elaine and me, she was Aunty. To the adults in the family, my mother, father and grandmother Kelly who lived with us, she was Nancy.

She was born to Joseph and Mary Kelly in Dorchester, an Irish Catholic neighborhood of Boston. They lived in St. Peter’s parish where my parents were married and I was baptized. My aunt grew up on Navillus Terrace (Sullivan backwards) with her sister Mary, who she always called Mae . They were only a few blocks from where my father lived. Her father died in 1947 and her mother died in 1984.

There were only 20 years between her and I. I was born before she joined the Order and my parents asked her to be my godmother. Every Mothers’ Day I would send her a card…a godmother card if I could find one, failing that a regular Mothers’ Day card. Our running joke was that I hoped I was not causing her any scandal by sending a Mothers’ Day to the convent each year.

My aunt was the first in our family to attend college, receiving a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree in Library Sciences.

What my siblings and I remember most are her summer visits to our home. In the early days she would arrive in full Franciscan habit, cord, tassel and rosary beads. Around our house she wore a scarf or small veil. It was then that we discovered she had red hair.

We loved having her visit. She was a quiet, gentle and calm presence. We also marveled at her always -present wooden clothes rack and the large green plastic basin that would appear in her room every summer.

My daughter, Julie, who was the first grandchild, shared a room with Aunty when we visited my parents during her stays there. Julie still talks about the wooden clothes rack, the large green plastic basin but most warmly about the tea parties my aunt and she would have in their shared bedroom.

Our family grew over the years. The four of us, her niece and nephews, brought into this world, 7 grand nephews and 2 grand nieces, which in turn, led to 3 great grand -nieces and 2 great grand -nephews.

We were her biological family, but all of you were her religious family, her community and her friends. We, the remaining members of her biological family, were greatly comforted over the years by the love, warmth and companionship provide by you, her religious sisters. You added years to her lie and we are forever grateful.

Our family not only grew, but it grew in the ways families have grown and evolved in this era: among our kids are adopted children, kids who have step-brothers and step -sisters, kids who have half-brothers and sisters. We have had some wonderful marriages and some marriages that did not survive. We have extended family members from Catholic, Protestant and Mormon faith traditions…members who are straight and gay.

The one constancy was her unfailing, non-judgmental, gentle, freely given love. She lived a life of acceptance of all and saw God in all of her family members. Hers’ was a life of practiced Christianity:

She was present when my father died and comforted him gently as he passed away.

She was a great comfort to our mother during her 12 years of widowhood. They talked and prayed together every day on the phone.

And looking back, I can see that she carried her own grief over the early death of her father and her mother’s 34 years as a widow.

She lived the prayer of St. Francis-

She sowed love; she gave pardon and acceptance; she certainly brought joy and light. She consoled and offered understanding, and we trust, that in her giving, she has received her eternal place of peace.

Dan Driscoll