Margaret Mahoney’s Eulogy

Good morning dear friends and welcome.

What a blessing to be together as we remember our dear sister, friend, and for many here today, a dear aunt.

Peggy entered the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany in 1956. At her reception into the Congregation, she chose her religious name: Sr. Alice Francis, in honor of her Mother and Father. What a tender moment that must have been for the family when they heard her chosen name for the first time.

Peggy lived to make others happy. As Mary Lou wrote, “her beautiful smile and infectious laugh brought joy to all around her”.

I met Peggy in the early 1960s when we were both assigned to Everett, MA to teach in a large Italian Parish school. Peg was already an experienced teacher, while I was a new-be never having taught. Peg was assigned 3rd grade, I was assigned grades 7 and 8. Not only were the kids in my classes bigger than I was, they were also far more worldly-wise and street smart than their teacher.

Thank God for Peggy, who became my school angel-teacher, for example: whenever I intercepted a note that the kids were passing, not understanding what some of the words meant, I would later show it to Peg who would always tell me the meaning, but only after she had a good laugh.

She not only taught me the street language of the kids I was teaching she also introduced me to some racy novels where I discovered a whole new and completely different culture than what I was raised on. What a great education she gave me! I guess one could say ‘she made me what I am today.’

The convent in Everett was near Lowell where Peg’s family lived and although our convent didn’t have a car, Peg managed to get home quite often. What a joy it was to meet the Mahoney’s. Peggy’s mom and dad, her brothers and sisters-in-law, and all her nieces and nephews. They were all so kind and always so much fun.

Peg loved singing and had a great voice. You can imagine her classroom full of music, song, and laughter. She was also a good disciplinarian. Her students obeyed her because they loved her, and they loved her because she first loved them.

Peg taught for over 47 years, about 20 of those in an inner-city school where she could be with her children, that is, those who were poor and underprivileged, sometimes called ‘latch-key children.’ She stayed with her students there until the school closed, which almost broke her heart.

Peggy always enjoyed driving and getting around, but mostly getting out! When she returned to the Motherhouse in 2009, she continued driving whenever she could. Somehow she always managed to get jobs that kept her on the road: volunteering at Sr. Pat’s House, bringing sisters to the doctors, going with them to the hospital, doing community errands, and daily drives to the post office.

Peg, as we know, was strong-willed and independent, and therefore fought to the end to keep her license. When the sad day came that she failed her annual driving test, she was of course devastated. But eventually, with God’s grace and her own innate courage and grit, she was able to let go and move on. Knowing IN HER HEART OF HEARTS that her own unique work and vocation here on earth had little to do with driving, but everything to do with SPREADING GOD’S LOVE AND JOY AND MAKING OTHERS HAPPY.

Eulogy written and delivered by Carol Kenyon, osf

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