**Sr. John Kevin McNulty**

**Date of Birth: April 3, 1920**

**Entered Eternal Life: December 4, 2018**

**Eulogy by: Odette Haddad OSF**

When I found out that I was to give John Kevin’s eulogy, I asked myself: How does one begin to capture and capsulize adequately such a long, rich life, 98 years long, a life lived so Graciously and full of God’s grace for more than 75 years as a Franciscan Sister of Allegany!

As I looked back, I realized that it was precisely this Graciousness that made such a lasting impression on me. So I decided to look up the definition of the word and, interestingly enough, the Christian take on it is “God’s Gracious intervention", along with synonyms such as: compassionate, kind, forgiving, tenderhearted, generous, and magnanimous—all words that so beautifully describe John Kevin!

When Sister John Kevin was born, she was given the name Kathleen. As a toddler, she became affectionately called Dolly by her family. The origin of this nickname traces back to her older brother John who, one day, came into the house after playing outside. While cooking, mom had placed little Kathleen sitting upright on the kitchen counter. On seeing this, John spontaneously exclaimed, "Mom, Kathleen looks just like a doll!"

When John Kevin was 4 years old, the family moved from New England to St. Petersburg, FL. On one of our many visits, John Kevin described St. Petersburg at the time as small and undeveloped “just like ourselves…with the potential for growth,” she said. [She was] always and ever full of hope!

John Kevin came to know our sisters at St. Paul’s school when she was a student there from kindergarten through 12th grade. While in high school, the sisters invited her to volunteer at the convent and at St. Anthony Hospital pharmacy. It was at the hospital that she first showed a desire to become a nurse. Yet, her desire to enter religious life after graduation took precedence over her professional life at the time.

On another visit, John Kevin told the story of her dismay about not being allowed to attend weddings at the time. So when her brother Joe and his wife Patricia were to get married and her older brother, Father John, was to officiate, she drove to the church and sat in the parking area to be in proximity to her family on this special occasion. The sacristan went out and invited her to come and sit in the sacristy during the wedding. With a twinkle in her eye, she said, “I got to see th wedding anyway.”

After varied ministries, John Kevin was elected regional minister in FL. The sisters, and those with whom she worked, recognized her as a woman of deep faith, compassion, integrity, and capability, and she had the extraordinary ability to bring out the best in each person!

Following leadership, John Kevin spent some sabbatical time in the Ritiro. While there, her dearest friend and bandmate, Louise Casey, who was living here at the motherhouse, became very ill. John Kevin, the caring, tenderhearted woman that she was, decided to stay in Allegany to be with Louise. John Kevin experienced a deep void at the death of Louise. She said that God’s gentle presence was her only consolation and strength during that time.

Always a prolific reader, John Kevin told me how deeply touched she was by James Martin’s book, “Jesus: A Pilgrimage.” She kept going back to it as she loved to expand her mind and deepen her relationship with Jesus, the center of her life, and to discover how he was still speaking to her today.

Always a people person, even during these past months of declining health, John Kevin enjoyed having visitors - her face would light up when someone came into her room. Because she loved with a big, vibrant heart and made everyone feel special and affirmed, she had a way of making her visitors feel better about themselves as they left her.

When I think back on my many blessed encounters with John Kevin, I always return to how true she was, to the very end, to that remarkable quality of Graciousness.

Dolly, may God’s face shine upon you and continue to be Gracious to you!