



Eulogy for Sr. Mary Morrow, DW

July 21, 1927 – March 22, 2017

By Sr. Ann Casagrande, DW

Today we gather to celebrate Mary Morrow's new life! We all knew Mary, some of us knew her as Theresa – most of us knew different aspects of her.

Today, let us gently go through some of the passages of Mary's life:

She was born July 21, 1927 to Boyce and Helen Morrow. At the age of 4, Mary contracted Polio and went to St. Charles Hospital in Port Jefferson, New York. She stayed at the hospital for many years, getting rehabilitation and her elementary schooling. Perhaps seeing the Daughters of Wisdom attending to all the children with such love and care, was the beginning of Mary's vocational call to religious life.

She entered the Daughters of Wisdom in 1949 in Ottawa, Canada and at age 22, she made her first vows. For the next 15 years, she worked in Medical Records and Admitting in both St. Charles Clinic in Brooklyn, NY and Maryview Hospital in Portsmouth Virginia.

For the next 14 years, (1964 and on) she worked in Hospital Administration. During these years, she worked in St. Charles Hospital in Port Jefferson, St. Charles Clinic in Brooklyn and Unity Hospital in Brooklyn, NY.

Most of her life, Mary was wheel chair bound. A former patient from St. Charles Hospital taught Mary how to drive with hand controls. The car was very beneficial for Mary – and she named all her cars, "Nellie" and in the end, we think she had had 5 Nellies!

In 1979, she moved into, what I think was the love of her life, Pastoral Care! Here, at Mercy Hospital in Rockville Center, she worked for the next 30 plus years until she retired around 2008. It was then that Mary herself, knew that the time had come for her to retire and go to Sound Beach. All of this is a general overview but let's fill in some of these pages:

Mary had a simple focus in life – she loved nature, the sun, the water, the beach and in short, she loved life and all people! People seemed to know that. When the ray of sunshine that she brought to her patients, came wheeling in to their room, people responded with a smile and deep gratitude for her visit, her listening empathy, encouragement and her promise of prayer for their journey.

In 1996, she received the Gold Star Employee Award from Mercy Hospital, an award given to those who not only contributed to patient care but also served as a role model for other employees. The staff at Mercy nicknamed her, Sister Mary Sunshine! Very appropriate!

She enjoyed reading the NY Times! Her great pleasure was to get the Sunday paper and she spent the week reading different sections. When Mary first went to Sound Beach, one of our sisters was there who was having difficulty focusing and remembering. Every morning, I would see the two of them sitting together and Mary was reading the N Y Times to her and they both seemed to be enjoying this time together. Of course, they were sitting where they could also see the beautiful LI Sound.

During her younger days in Maryview, I heard that she read “dirty books” and hid them under her mattress. I asked –“What dirty books?” The answer – “National Geographic! – sometimes the pictures of natives were naked!” I say – thank God Mary had the common sense to continue her reading – and perhaps, in those days, to continue hiding them!

Another of Mary’s favorite times was to visit Lee’s Riding Stables in Litchfield, CT. Mary would visit whenever she came to Litchfield. She enjoyed watching the horses and became good friends with Lee. Sr. Rosemarie called to tell Lee of Mary’s death. Lee did a lot of work with handicapped children and shared that one time, during Mary’s visit, they were able to get Mary on a horse! What a joy that must have been!

A traumatic event occurred when Mary lost her brother, Bobby, in 1977. He and his wife, Joan, had 4 children, the youngest of whom was just making her First Communion. Mary stayed by Joan and often gathered the children and brought them out to Star of the Sea in Port Jefferson. The bond has always remained especially strong with Joan, Harry, the children and cousins that Mary also packed in the car and brought to the beach!

The gospels tell us not to light a lamp and put it under a basket – but rather set it on a lampstand to give light to all. I think Mary’s life is an example of this parable.

And now that you are in heaven, Mary – we know that you will leave the light on for us!