

Remembering Sister Patrice Boyle, IHM
June 22, 1922 – Jan. 27, 2014



Expressing the wish to have both the Remembering and the Liturgy of Resurrection on the same day was the expressed desire of Patrice Boyle. It seems to me to be quite in character with this sister, who in life was direct, outspoken and, as an old proverb states, “Did not suffer fools lightly.” It is characteristic of her no-nonsense, direct and to the point personality.

Is it any wonder that she so enjoyed the writings of Teresa of Avila of whom, it is said, did not “suffer fools lightly.” At the same time Patrice had a *soft side*, illustrated in her love of creation – the trees, the sea, her IHM friendships, and above all, her family.

Catherine Mary Boyle whom we have always known in community as Patrice, was born on June 22, 1922. She was the oldest daughter of Patrick Boyle from County Mayo, Ireland, and Mary Doyle from Au Sable, Mich. Her birth was followed by that of two sisters, Irene, who we know and cherish as our Sister Annette, and another sister named Betty. Patrice was named Catherine after both grandmothers and baptized at Holy Redeemer Church in Detroit where her parents had been married.

When the family moved to Dearborn in 1929, the girls first attended Henry Ford Grade School and then were enrolled at Sacred Heart High School. Catherine was in the 10th grade, and this was her first experience with nuns. Here she discovered that she excelled in organizing activities and she formed deep friendships. She blossomed socially as well. Outspoken and candid, today we might call her “feisty.” This trait offers a key as well to her admiration of Teresa of Avila, the mystic and outspoken critic and reformer of the Carmelite nuns in the 16th century.

Patrice never saw herself other than what she was... lively and fiercely loyal to her friends, her family and to the IHM congregation.

Catherine was a very good student. She excelled in sports, especially swimming. Her agility, sense of timing and discipline also expressed themselves in dancing. She frequently took part in contests that gave evidence of an ability to move and innovate, characteristics that expressed themselves over and over as she adapted herself to the changing rhythms of religious life over the years.

At Sacred Heart, Dearborn, Patrice made the acquaintance of Marian Hass. She and Catherine became inseparable friends. And so it was, that when Marian converted to Catholicism and entered the IHM congregation on June 29, 1939, it was no surprise that Catherine entered as well. Marian became Sister Sebastian and Catherine, Sister Patrice after her father.

Catherine's friends, astounded at the decision of this lively companion, made wagers on how long she would stay. "*This lively young woman, feisty and outspoken . . . she will never stay.*" But stayed she did... and now it is 75 years later and today we are celebrating a long life lived with energy and dedication. Catherine is what I would call *vintage IHM*. During her years in the congregation she taught in 16 different schools, was a principal, and in her later years a librarian. In 2003 she retired to the Motherhouse here in Monroe, but was never inactive. Her interest in the life of the congregation was never far from her thoughts... and opinions as well. One of the joys of these later years was to live in close companionship with Sister Annette, her sister "twice over."

This afternoon as we celebrate her life in the context of this liturgy of Resurrection, we are mindful that her choice of readings reflect both the active and contemplative sides of our Sister Patrice. Echoing Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, Patrice acknowledges that she too has fought a good fight and is both conscious and confident, as we are, that she has received the crown of righteousness prepared for her from the God she served so well and so faithfully. And so too, our hearts are not troubled, and it is with both joy and gratitude that we celebrate her life in the context of this liturgy of praise, love and thanksgiving. And I am sure that she is both honored and delighted that her student Archbishop Tobin is the presider in this last great celebration of her life... even if she did give him a D in handwriting.

Written and delivered by Margaret Brennan, IHM
January 31, 2014