

REMEMBERING SISTER JANICE REDDY

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Our dear sister, aunt and friend, Janice, is remembered as a very animated person with a quick mind. "She was an intellectual", a friend said of her, "who shared ideas, read about and discussed everything."

Janice was a twin, born in Detroit, MI on April 14, 1925. She and her twin, Kathleen, called Kate, were the third and fourth of five children, Paul, Carol, Janice, Kathleen and Gerardine, born to Thomas Louis Reddy and Stella Stier.

Janice said that her father was a great Tiger baseball fan. It happened that Janice and Kate were born on Opening Day in 1925. Dad first checked to see that Mother and babies were ok, then went off to the stadium for the baseball game. On Mr. Reddy's 90th birthday, he was wished birthday greetings over the PA at the Tiger game that day.

Janice grew up in a loving family. Their summer vacations were spent camping with a tent and open fire! "Remember," Carol said to me, "this was Depression time". Their favorite camping trips were up into Canada. There was a neighborhood group of Dads who would decide where the families who lived in the area would travel together for these outings. And since financial resources were tight at this time, Mrs. Reddy made most of the childrens' clothes during their growing up.

When Janice and her twin sister, Kate, were only fifteen, their Mother went to God! A close girlhood chum of Janice, Mary Naughton, I.H.M., remembers Janice telling that all of the children stood by Mrs. Reddy's bed during her last illness and told their Mother what they intended to do with their lives. Janice and Carol were both going to be "nuns", Kate and Gerrie, nurses and Paul said he was going to join the Marines! All of this happened as predicted! After this very sad event, "It was my father who kept the family together," Carol told me. "He was a great man and lived to be ninety-three!".

Janice attended Saint Gregory School in Northwest Detroit from first to twelfth grade. After graduation in 1943, she entered the Postulate on July 1, of that same year. Her sister, Carol, was already in the Congregation. She had entered two years earlier. When Janice was Received into the Novitiate on January 2, 1944, she was given the name, Amedia. Janice was not very fond of her name but the Novice Mistress, Sister Mary Hubert Manion, tried to make her feel better by telling her that the name meant "love of God". It's obvious, from her writings, that Janice grew into a deep love of God.

Janice began her teaching career at Saint Mary's School, Monroe, MI in 1945. She taught elementary and high school students well into the 1980s, then began a career in Adult Education. Janice excelled as a high school teacher of History and English. For many years she and Sister Mary Fran Hogan, I.H.M. took students to Washington DC for an immersion into the political scene there. On her Ministry Commitment form in 1985, Janice wrote, (I) "...continually challenge my students to an awareness of their baptismal calling, to become the persons they are called to be... and to become Citizens of Earth, aware of their oneness with all being..."

When Janice was no longer in the classroom full-time, she began teaching English as a second language to Russian and Jewish immigrants. Of this work, she said, "I loved it greatly!...I am more aware of the sameness of all of humankind, the same desire for dignity, belonging and success in any endeavor."

As most of us know, Janice was a very vivacious person. Even though she suffered with illness much of the time, she kept herself involved in life. During her Retirement years, before coming to the Motherhouse, she lived with her sister, Carol, in Farmington Hills, MI, was very active in her parish, Saint Alexander's, participated in a local I.H.M. Theology Discussion Group and continued to let her voice be heard on political issues.

Janice is a loved aunt of her nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews. She helped out with car-pooling and baby-sitting whenever she was able. "They could count on her," Gerrie said, "to love, counsel and have fun!"

Janice found her leisure in reading, traveling and gardening. She went on nine cruises, visiting, among other places, Alaska, Hawaii, Russia and the Caribbean. On these trips, Janice loved the adventure of travel. "However, most of all," her sister Gerrie said, "it was her extraordinary gift of warm, friendly interchange with the people she met" that made the trips so enjoyable. Her signature symbol was a "travel hat", usually a garden hat with lace. On these cruises, she came to be known as "the friendly lady with the hat". Her joy in gardening was being able to "plant and nurture", Janice said. Too, she loved displaying her flowers to bring out the wonder of color. When she came to Monroe, Janice found great delight in her art classes. She had discovered a new way to stretch her creativity. Janice was also an amateur photographer. Because of her, the family has a treasury of albums portraying their family history.

Janice found her strength in Centering Prayer. For her, spirituality is a relationship between the God within us and of all creation, forming a unity of love and respect. In 1998, she wrote, (I have) "a greater sense of interdependence with all humankind and the wonder, awe and gratitude of a kinship with all creation". On her Page of Life, she asked herself the question, "Who am I today ? Her answer, "A Christian Feminist called to be a prophetic presence wherever I touch lives...giving witness to that Source of power, life and love that we call God...I am open to the yet to be discovered surprises and promises of this all-loving God..." Janice recently said that her scripture parallel for life was, "My soul magnifies the Lord!" "My life has been one of great joy", she stated.

During her months in the Health Care Center, Janice considered her ministry as one of Presence. She would find and make copies of reflective readings and spiritual "nose-gays" to pass out to staff and friends for their own enrichment.

"Janice was absolutely wonderful to care for. She was never one to complain." Laura Nemeč, a care-giver on 3D in the Health Care Center, told me. "She was always lively even if all she could do was sit up!"

Janice, your vivacious spirit has "sparked" our lives. Your work for justice and witness to being in right relationship has inspired and enriched many. We pray that you have already discovered those surprises and promises of our all-loving God, of which you spoke. We love you. We will miss you. We wish you peace.

Patricia A. O'Donnell, I.H.M.

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