

Remembering Sister Mary Robert Gilloe, IHM 8-1-2000

It has been said that "each of us has been given the gift of life in order to explore and discover that which really matters," Sr. Mary Robert never shrank from either. She explored and discovered with intensity her deep commitment to God through her service to others.

Sister Mary Robert was the first-born child of Robert and Beatrice Gilloe. Her three siblings were Helen, Loretta and Irene. Her parents were outstanding Catholics who dedicated three of their children to the IHM community: Sister Mary Robert, Sister Helene (who had a short life of forty-five years), and Loretta. Sister Mary Robert attended St. Boniface school and later the family moved to St. Mary of Redford Parish. She continued her education at St. Boniface, since St. Mary of Redford was in the process of completing the high school. She was the first postulant from St. Mary of Redford Parish and attributed her vocation to the influence of Sister Mary William and Sister Mary Raymond at St. Boniface.

Monsignor Cook was a close friend of the Gilloe family. One day when the family attended daily mass, upon returning home, they found fire had destroyed their home and belongings. Monsignor Cook persuaded the Gilloes to move into the Gordon home. This home continued to be the Gilloe residence for a number of years.

After the death of her parents, her sister Irene became the matriarch. She graciously looked out the welfare of the Gilloe women. Presently Irene's daughter Pat and a nephew Patrick continue this role.

Sister Mary Robert had written that God had favored her with 53 years dedicated to the heritage of Christian education. These were very happy years in her life. She had taught both grade school and high school and had been a high school councilor as well as a principal. In 1962 she had been appointed as superior and principal at St. Catherine's. One senior boy attributed his staying in school and making it to graduation to Sister Mary Robert's kindness, caring and tutoring.

When she was missioned to Marygrove, the sisters there unanimously voted her to be on the team for the house. She gratefully and joyfully remembered her 10 years of service there. Working here with a very congenial group of co-workers was a very meaningful experience for her. Her deep commitment of service was exemplified by her privilege of serving the sisters as a sacristan and infirmarian in the convent.

On her 1975 commitment form, Sister Mary Robert quoted the scripture passage, "Come apart with me and rest a while." Little did she know that after serving the sisters as a pastoral person on main floor infirmary, after tending graciously and lovingly to the needs and wants of these sisters for 7 years, she would become a resident of that facility for the last six years of her life. Here she experienced the love and dedication of the nurses and assistants who now care for her physical and social needs.

I want to make mention of the constant, loving care and attention that Sister Loretta Gilloe gave Sister Mary Robert. She not only went to see her every day and many times during the day, but she also lovingly provided treats which Sister Mary Robert appreciated. She tended to her sister's clothes and was beyond doubt, a loving, caring sister. Loretta was always an "in charge" person and did her loving care of Sister Mary Robert faithfully and generously.

We are not able to adequately share all of Sister Mary Robert's joys and achievements of her 77 years as a dedicated and faithful IHM. Together we rejoice in her going home to the Father.

I'll close by sharing a poem which expresses the love and friendship I shared with her.

There's a unique and strong bond between Mary Robert and me.

She has been with me during many of my life's high points

And she has endured some of my lows.

She has seen sides of me that nobody else has

And she understands a lot of things about me---

Things I don't need to explain and probably

Couldn't put into words.

Helen Glaser, IHM

August 4, 2000