



SISTER LOUISE DE PAUL BURKE
December 12, 1931 — September 2, 2005

It is an honor and a privilege to be the one from her group to share some reflections about Sister Louise de Paul's life with you. And what I offer is only a thumbnail sketch. There will always be more!

“MY HEART IS READY, O GOD...”

Psalm 108

These words from Psalm 108 were the heart of Sister Louise de Paul's prayer—not just these last two weeks here at Caritas Christi—but her whole life.

Louise de Paul/Aunt Kate/ “Mother Paul from New York” had what I call, “Get out of the Boat Faith.” However, unlike Peter, she kept her eyes and heart focused on Jesus—very much in the spirit of Mother Seton—her “Mentor.” The life of Mother Seton was a big influence on Louise's decision to enter religious life. She said, “I read the life of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and I was impressed.” Louise loved being a Sister of Charity and teaching others about her beloved Mother Seton. She said she would be a Sister of Charity until the day she died.

Louise/Aunt Kate was born Catherine Mary Burke on Long Island, New York on December 12, 1931—a twin! What excitement there was in the Burke household that day! The other six children had been sent around the corner to a favorite uncle's house. Her sister Pat tells us that it was a wonderful surprise to see their mother in bed with not one—but two babies. Louise loved being a twin and it was uncanny how she and Ceil would often be on the same wave length. You could take Sister Louise de Paul out of New York—but, I'm sure her New York accent went to heaven with her.

When God finally came to welcome Sister Louise de Paul into eternity, her lamps were very full! Time after time last evening we heard about her generosity...her compassion... her ability to relate to people of all ages...her sense of humor... her love of her family...her self-forgetfulness...her indomitable spirit and courage. She lived and taught these—by word and example.

She said of children “They are my life.” One of her former pupils stated, “She taught me a lot of wonderful values that I still apply to my life today.” Another reiterated, “I think she was always a firm disciplinarian, but it was always done with love!”

When I visited with her last week, one of the things she wanted to know was if I had been able to hire a maintenance person for the school. My needs were important to her.

Last night, her niece gave us a bird's eye view of the love she had for her family. "When Aunt Kate came to visit, she always brought a box of chocolates and a bag of Twizzlers, and enjoyed seeing who would end up with the chocolate covered cherry. She swam, colored, played games with us—no 'sitting in state'—definitely the beloved Aunt Kate." It was still a concern to her that she had not been able to come home for Father Bill's funeral. She shared this with me last week and then said "You can only do what you can do."

The Gospel read when Sister's body was returned to Caritas Christi reminded us that Jesus was going to prepare a place for Louise and, when it was ready, He would be back to take her with Him...that where Jesus is she may also be...though He took longer than Louise thought He should be taking!

Louise, your heart was/is so ready...your lamps full to overflowing...your mansion prepared...we know you go in peace...we love you!

*Funeral Liturgy Reflection
Sister Kathleen McCauley
September 5, 2005*