



**SISTER MARGARET MARIE DOWD**  
**January 12, 1918 — July 10, 2007**

Joseph, Richard, John, William, James, Regis, Robert, Catherine, Mary, Anne and Rita, these are the names of the children born to Andrew and Margaret (Shally) Dowd. Regis became Reverend Regis; Anne became Sister Regis Mary (later Sister Anne) and Rita became our Sister Margaret Marie. There were also cousins related to the Dowd family who were members of the Sisters of Charity, Sister Joseph Louise Reilly and Sister Ricardo Shally.

The twins, Anne and Rita, were born on January 12, 1918. They grew up in Mt. Washington and were members of St. Mary of the Mount Parish.

Sister Anne entered the Sisters of Charity, but Rita entered the work force. Several years after Anne entered, Rita decided to join her sister. When she announced this news to her mother, her mother did not believe her. Rita questioned her mother's disbelief and according to the family, her mother told her, "When you settle down, stop smoking, pay all those outstanding bills, and learn how to accept responsibility, I'll believe you." This was a shock to Rita, but she set about with determination that she would do all these things and earn her mother's approval. She entered in January 1945, and became our Sister Margaret Marie.

Like many of us, Sister Margaret Marie received her education at Seton Hill University and was awarded a bachelor's in education degree. She was sent to teach in numerous diocesan schools which we staffed. She told me several years ago that the assignments she most enjoyed were her years in New Orleans where she was part of an exchange program between the Sisters of Charity and the Holy Family Sisters.

Sister enjoyed working with crafts. It was really her favorite hobby and she was happy when she would find a new pattern or when she had two or three projects going. Her niece, Margaret, told me, that Sister never came to visit them empty handed. She always brought small gifts for the family, not "store bought" but, handmade, wrapped in pretty paper and ribbons. The ooo's and ah's from the children delighted Sister. Margaret added, "Sister Margaret Marie was such a generous person."

Sister enjoyed playing cards. I understand she was a sharp player and daring player and was not above cheating a little. Bob said that the only time he ever remembers Sister Anne getting angry was when Sister Margaret Marie would cheat. If Sister thought she didn't have enough to bid, she had a series of signs she used to alert her partner, that she had some helping card of the same suit. If she had some helping hearts she would point to her heart. If she had some diamonds she would point to her ring finger. If she had some clubs she would tap on the table with a closed fist. If she didn't have much of anything, she would promptly bid nine of something, so that no one would be able to make the bid. I think she would have done well in Las Vegas.

Her family says she had developed her "con" talents to a highly sophisticated level.

Her niece, Margaret and husband Mike and their family, came to the summer festivals with a certain amount of money to spend. Sisters Margaret Marie and Anne would be their guides. Sister Margaret Marie would make sure she was the guide for Margaret's husband. Sister was genuinely proud of the handiwork of the Sisters and as she showed them the various wares you would hear her saying to Mike, "Oh, look at this"; "Isn't this beautiful?" "Come see this." She succeeded in "conning" him to buy many more things than he had planned to buy.

Last evening many sisters and family members mentioned Sister Margaret Marie's constant smile. Even during these past years when it became more difficult for her to communicate with us, the smile never left her. When she was in Elizabeth Ann Hall, the nurse aides called her Sister Mary Sunshine. When she moved up to the second floor, she took that smile with her. It remained with her until almost the very end.

We have all heard it said the we do not change when we become older. We become more like ourselves. I think this is true of Sister Margaret Marie. From her earliest days in the community she had the gift of making guests feel welcome and so important. She never lost that gift of warmly welcoming people. When guests came to visit or we went in to care for her, even though she did not speak, her smile and her body language made it clear that "All are welcome. All are welcome. All are welcome in this place."



Well, Sister Mary Sunshine, we will soon be saying our last goodbyes. We will miss you. The second floor will not be quite the same. We thank you for the joy you brought to us, especially during these last years. We thank you for helping us to laugh. We thank you for accepting our care for you. You made it an honor and a privilege. You taught us how one can suffer and never complain. You accepted us and loved us and never expected anything from us. And above all, you allowed us to love you.

*Funeral Liturgy Reflection  
Sister Harold Ann Jones  
July 13, 2007*