



SISTER MADELINE SOPHIE GLOSS
December 16, 1916 - September 15, 2007

“Jesus loves you and so do I.”

Thus Sister Madeline Sophie assured every sister in the infirmary as she made her daily rounds to their rooms. In the simplicity so characteristic of her, Sophie expressed a basic truth of the faith which she cherished and lived to the fullest.

Born December 16, 1916, just a week before Christmas, and carried the very next day to Holy Family Church in Lawrenceville to be baptized, this eighth of the nine children of John and Sophia Duchnowski was christened Theresa Catherine. What a lovely Christmas gift for that large loving family! Amidst this loving family, this baby with the large dark eyes grew into a bright, lively little girl and as the years passed a serious yet fun-loving teenager. Contemporaries doubted that “life-of-the-party” Theresa would make it as religious sister! But we know she did, and a most faithful one at that.

In March of her senior year in high school, recognizing a call from God to the religious life, Theresa petitioned the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill to accept her as a candidate for the Congregation. Life in a large family had somewhat prepared her for life in community. Her parents, brothers and sisters, nieces, nephews, and their children were always dear to her heart; she loved to tell stories about their activities.

Father Joseph Clougherty, pastor of Saint Kieran Parish, in his letter to Mother Eveline, expressed his great pleasure in recommending Theresa as a girl of very high moral standard, an example to all in the parish, a frequent, almost daily communicant, a person of more than average intelligence, besides being very industrious, someone who would be an asset to the community. Those of us who later had the opportunity to live with Sister Madeline Sophie can testify to the accuracy of Father’s predictions.

On September 8, 1934, Theresa Catherine entered the novitiate at Seton Hill. At the end of her postulancy, she was given the religious habit and the name Sister Madeline Sophie, and at the completion of her novitiate, this young sister began her lifelong ministry as a primary teacher.

Father’s Clougherty’s expectations were on the mark. For over 73 years, Sister Madeline Sophie lived out her commitment in humility, simplicity, and charity. Most of her years were spent as a primary (usually first grade) teacher in schools staffed by the Sisters of Charity: Sacred Heart, Pittsburgh; Resurrection, Brookline; Holy Cross, Youngwood; Saint Leo, Altoona; Saint Irenaeus, Oakmont; Saint Philip, Crafton; Saint Luke, Carnegie; Saint Regis, Trafford; Saint Kieran, Lawrenceville; Cathedral, Greensburg; and Immaculate Conception, Irwin. For six years, Sophie was both principal and teacher at Saint Irenaeus, Oakmont, and Sister Servant of the convent. Sister spent her final years in school as a tutor at Holy Innocents/Elizabeth Seton Elementary School, Sheraden.

Let's visualize the typical lovingly-prepared environment in which she would spend many days over many years: an attractively arranged primary classroom in a Catholic school: small desks, carefully arranged chairs for reading lessons; brightly colored charts; record player or tape recorder; crucifix on the wall; flowers in front of the Blessed Mother statue; a bulletin

board decorated according to the season; a display of children's work. There was usually a card on each desk, modeling how the child was to print or write his or her name. Thirty or 40, 50 or 60 well-behaved little children sitting up straight at their desks, each quietly doing the assigned task. Moving about the room, Sister Madeline Sophie, guiding each child through the early stages of his or her formal education. Firm but compassionate, Sister challenged each child according to his/her strengths and abilities. She was very good to poor children, often finding clothes for the needy. Boring? Not to Sister Madeline Sophie. To her each child was unique, a gift from God whom she was privileged to love and help prepare for life. She loved her little pupils and they loved her.



At the same time, taking classes on Saturdays and in summers, Sophie fulfilled the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Education Degree from Duquesne University, which she received in 1947. Throughout the years Sister Madeline Sophie participated in other classes and workshops to enhance her teaching background.

Always on hand to help when help was needed, Sister Madeline Sophie spent hours each year making candy for the summer festival. From Seton Hill she went out each morning during the summer to teach Catechism in near and not-so-near parishes. Afternoons or evenings were often given to playing cards. She loved to laugh, and often had a joke to add to the fun.

In 1999, Sister Madeline Sophie retired from the active ministry and devoted her remaining years at Caritas Christi to the ministry of prayer, spending much time in the chapel or visiting the sick, always present for community prayers and meals. She also attended community meetings and participated in many other activities provided at Caritas Christi. She never willingly missed "Music with Gene." Sophie also loved to watch Lawrence Welk and Andre Rieu.

When she took her customary place in the front row at Mass last Friday morning, I wonder if Sister Madeline Sophie realized that the Minister of Holy Communion would bring her Holy Viaticum.

Jesus loves you, and so do we, dear Sophie.

Funeral Liturgy Reflection
Sister Francis de Sales Joyce, S.C.
September 19, 2007