



SISTER KATHRYN PALAS
October 15, 1936 – March 25, 2005

“As this night closes in, I need not remind you of who I am, or what I have done. I am the one who needs to remember. I am someone you love. That is enough.”

-Meister Eckhart

That is how Kathryn lived, and that is how she died—always secure in the love of her Lord. Someone once told me that Sister Kathryn thought everyone loved her because she loved everyone.

As I got to know Kathryn over the years, I learned how true this was. Kathryn was loved by everyone, because she loved everyone. In the 36 years I knew her, I never heard her say anything uncomplimentary about anyone, make fun of anyone, or in anyway deliberately hurt anyone. She was a Christian in the true meaning of the word. **She loved all of us.**

Kathryn Palas was born on October 15, 1936, to Emily and Jake Palas in Ingram, PA, and grew up in the little town of Greg’s Station. Her parents were blessed with seven more children, and Kathryn was blessed with four sisters and three brothers. She was always so proud of her family. Kathryn also had a loving relationship with each of them. Everyone of them held a special place in her heart. Anytime she had the chance to spend some time with them, it was a great treat for her. The Thanksgivings celebrated at Elizabeth Seton Convent, and the family reunions were highlights of her life. Her family was so special to her. When she talked about them it was always with a cute story, a great smile, and a light heart. **She loved all of them.**

Kathryn went to a small parochial school, Immaculate Conception, in Carnegie. And just the other day she was telling me that, “**It was a good school!**” She attended high school at Carnegie Public School for one week, (**not so good**), and then transferred to Saint Luke’s (**really great**) where she graduated in 1954. Kathryn enjoyed her years of education (and I understand she was a good student, popular, and very into the fun scene.) **She loved all of it.**

After graduation, Kathryn entered the Sisters of Charity, and this is when we had the privilege of knowing her. When Kathryn was a novice, she took the name Sister Zita. She was known by that name until 1967, when she returned to her baptismal name. Kathryn taught in several grade schools in the Altoona-Johnstown, Pittsburgh, Greensburg, and Tucson dioceses. But it wasn’t long before her love for science was apparent, and she became a teacher of biology in several high schools: Saint Anselm, Bishop McCort, Bishop Guilfoyle, Elizabeth Seton, Mon Valley Catholic, Lawrenceville Catholic, and Seton LaSalle. During those years of teaching, she was also engaged in some administrative service. In 1980, she was appointed principal at Geibel High School. In 1990, Kathryn became a counselor at Seton Hill University, and in 1991, she became academic vice-principal at Greensburg Central Catholic. In 1994, she became the academic vice-principal at Seton LaSalle High School.

When Kathryn was appointed principal at Geibel, she was quoted in the Valley Independent Newspaper: “I am committed to Catholic education and convinced it is the best way of communicating Christ to others. I hope to create a spirited atmosphere that will enable students to form good self-images and to grow spiritually, intellectually and socially. The challenge is to promote faith person-oriented education.”

Kathryn was also an adjunct professor of biology at LaRoche College, and she taught Advanced Placement Biology in Seton LaSalle’s SCHOLAR program. In 1994, she was named “Who’s Who Among American Teachers.”

She also believed in education for her own spiritual, intellectual, and social growth. She graduated with a BA in biology with chemistry as a minor from Seton Hill University in 1968, and with an MS in biology from Purdue University in 1973. After this, Kathryn received post graduate credits at Notre Dame and Dayton University doing work in counseling. **Scholarship and education were extremely important to her.**

Now you cannot talk about Sister Kathryn without mentioning sports. I think they ranked in the top four with family, Sisters of Charity, and education. I never knew a thing about football, soccer, or wrestling until I knew about Kathryn. Now, I am an armchair authority on all three! I went to so many football games, because Jake and Pat were stars, so many soccer tournaments because Melissa was a champion, and really just one wrestling match because Pat pinned his opponent before we had a chance to sit down. I was happy the family wasn’t any larger.

Last December, I had two tickets to a Steeler game. I said to Kathryn, “Maybe you don’t feel up to going to a game.” She looked at me with a smile, and said, “When I can’t go to see the Steelers, then you will know I am sick.” She went to the game that day, and enjoyed it immensely. **Her loves were many.**

Yes, Kathryn, you love us, and we love you. I am so proud to be your friend, and I know many hearts are saying these same words tonight, as we bid you farewell.

*Funeral Liturgy Reflection
Sister Dorothy Dolan
March 30, 2005*