

SISTER MARY FLORENCE SCOTT

April 19, 1917 - September 30, 2009



I had the privilege of living with Sister Mary Florence at Cathedral convent in Greensburg and of joining in the Wednesday evening card game. However, my friendship with her goes back to the late 60s when she and Sister Agnes Louise were on the Retreat Committee. She is one of those very special people in my life! From her I have learned in a deeper way about wisdom, joy and generosity and that people (Sisters of Charity, family, friends) are wonderful expressions of the love of God for us.

There is not enough time or space to chronicle all her accomplishments.

Saint Vincent de Paul says: "If God is the center of your life, no words are necessary. Your mere presence will touch hearts."

This says it all - and has always been evident in her life. Her senior yearbook, June 1936, contained these comments about Rita "Scotty" Scott, as written by her classmates: "Scotty is one of the most charitable members of the senior class. Neatness, perseverance, gems in the crown of glory, are two of her best friends, She will be remembered for her loyalty and jolly wit, she is generous . . . kind . . . loyal and true . . ." We who have been privileged to call her sister, aunt, friend, have experienced this daily.

Her life can be compared to the puzzle that when completed portrays the image of God that each of us is called to be. Sister Mary Florence's capstone pieces are facets of love: for her God, her family, her community, her friends. Let us look at several of these key pieces.

Saint John defines joy as, "the echo of God's life in us." This was definitely one of Sister Mary Florence's hallmark virtues and a central piece of the puzzle that was her life. The ending of our community motto, ". . . and remember that God is ever present," captures Sister Mary Florence's life. God was present to her in the garden, playing cards, going to the beach with her family, assembling a jigsaw puzzle, enjoying family and friends and sitting in solitude with God.

Her humility and simplicity were also integral pieces of the puzzle. Sister Gertrude expressed it so well, "She was always there - for everyone."

One other central piece of this puzzle was her ability to enjoy life and have fun at a good card game, a Steeler, Notre Dame or Pirate victory, a visit from a friend, taking her nieces to Canada, or just being outside, socializing at the Red Hat Society gatherings, where she was known as "Red Rose." It was wonderful to hear her chuckle; she had a great sense of humor.

A fourth piece was her gift of wisdom. Sister Mary Florence knew in her heart when she was being called to “retirement,” and as we all know, “retirement” in the Sisters of Charity is often an invitation to a new ministry – a new lease on life. No sitting back and watching the world go by for Sister Mary Florence! She moved to Assumption Hall, and became the director of the Elizabeth Ann Seton Hall, the residence for our Sisters with memory impairment, not exactly the common notion of retirement! There was no rancor, no trying to “hold to on the old.” She was so open to all the possibilities in her life.

After her “second retirement,” Sister Mary Florence gave new meaning to the term “volunteer.” Whatever needed done, she did it graciously and efficiently. Several of the staff at De Paul Center said that she always brought peace to all situations. “Sister Mary Florence is a woman of peace,” is how she was described to me.

She knew when it was time to move to Caritas Christi, and what vibrance she added to life there, building jigsaw puzzles, to winning first place with Sister Inez Mary in the boat paddling competition for those who were 80+, as a house council member, being active in Seton Family and helping to lead the seminar, “Ageless in the Lord,” for her sisters.

Being able to let go is such a gift! I saw it again when she retired from the work of the Elizabeth Seton Guild, a special mission of hers for 13 years, when she inherited it from Sister Agnes Louise. She just said to me, “I gave it all to Sister Miriam Richard. She’ll be fine!”

The puzzle of her life is complete; that little black suitcase had all she needed to move into the “mansion prepared for her by Jesus.” Ours is still a work in progress

What *she* wrote in an earlier reflection about Sister Agnes Louise is most appropriate for *her*. Sister Mary Florence, “in her own last weeks of life, so fragile, yet so powerful, for it was not the size of the deeds she did but the light of love that sparkled through those deeds.”

“Let all the earth cry out to God with joy,” as Sister Mary Florence “enters God’s gates with thanksgiving.”

We are blessed, Sister Mary Florence, because you have touched our hearts!

*Funeral Liturgy Reflection
Sister Kathleen McCauley
October 2, 2009*