

Memento for Sister M. Agatha Ann, CSC

(Mary Agatha Farrell)

December 30, 1923 - January 25, 2019

These memories were shared by Sister Karla McKinnie, CSC, at the funeral on January 29, 2019.

Sister M. Agatha Ann (Mary Agatha Farrell) was born on December 30, 1923, in Los Angeles, California. She was named after her paternal aunt, Sister Mary Agatha, BVM She was the fourth of seven children of Louisa Jane Hutson and Jeremiah Aloysius Farrell and the first born in California. Sister Agatha Ann was preceded in death by her sister Mary Margaret Farrell Feeley and three brothers: Jeremiah Hutson Farrell, Thomas Edward Farrell and Joseph Blaise Farrell. She is survived by her sister, Sister Estelle Marie (Farrell), CSC, and brother John Michael Farrell. Her surviving 13 nieces and nephews remember her musical and baking skills. Her niece Therese Feeley shared that “during a summer visit to her father in Manhattan Beach, California, Agatha leaned out the window and picked some lemons and made an outstanding lemon meringue pie. More importantly, she said, Auntie Agatha was someone you could talk to at any time of day about anything that was bothering you. She listened non-judgmentally and offered guidance when asked. Many nieces and nephews continued to seek her advice even after retiring to South Bend.”

Her family lived in Saint Agnes Parish in Los Angeles, where our sisters have served for over 100 years. They all attended Saint Agnes School, keeping a strong connection with friends made there. The Mulligans were in the school and parish at the same time.

Sister Mary Mulligan, CSC, recalled that “anyone dealing with Ag, as she was known to us, knew she was a good listener who responded graciously whether as a friend or when in authority. Parishioners loved her enthusiasm and generous response to their needs. At St. Louise de Marillac Parish in Covina, California, the parishioners were very unhappy that she was leaving as she had developed not only a wonderful religious program but also had acquired many friends. Before she left the area, her brother Michael had all the siblings over for a family reunion inviting the Mulligans to join. It was a day of wonderful memories for all of us.”

After high school, Sister Agatha Ann worked briefly in a civil service job for the War Department. She felt she had a vocation so on February 11, 1945, she entered the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Beginning in 1949, her early days in community were spent teaching in many schools in the West. Several sisters remember that Sister was a strong educator who was direct, insightful in handling situations and a model teacher of teachers. She was a proponent of Catholic education. She became principal in two different schools and ended her education ministry working in the Department of Education in the Archdiocese of San Francisco. While teaching, she received her Bachelor of Arts from Saint Mary of the Wasatch in Utah and her Master of Arts from Santa Clara University in California. She had a brief time in pastoral care at Holy Cross Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah. Though she was there only a year, she returned to pastoral care and chaplaincy for eight years at St. Elizabeth Care Center in North Hollywood, California.

Her final years of ministry were in parishes, working with the elderly or religious education which was interrupted for a time by serving on the Regional Council for the West. As a counselor, she was empathetic, kind, had a clear understanding of the sisters, and concern for the good of the person. Her forthrightness came forth in decisions. Her prayerfulness and sense of humor were evident in community and ministry.

Sister Agatha Ann was also a religious superior who was unpretentious in the role, whether as a local convent superior, a postulant assistant or regional councilor. She saw herself as a private person who was accountable and responsible in her duties. She was organized in her personal living with few needs, choosing to live simply.

Many witnessed her warm hospitality and engaging smile. Sisters who lived with her found her an excellent cook who provided gourmet delights. She could be termed an "old shoe," although she was noted for her high heels and professional dress.

Sister retired to Saint Catherine by the Sea in Ventura, California in 2002. At that time, she loved to read the daily newspaper, watch TV news and enjoy a good movie. She seemed to appreciate beauty and watch the birds outside her window.

She decided to move to Saint Mary's in 2011 because she desired to help others. Even in her declining health, her graciousness and sense of humor

would show.

Sister Agatha Ann, God took you quickly. It was noted that you died on the same day as your best friend, Sister Ann Marie Towers, CSC. Coincidence or gift? May you rest in peace.