

SISTER ANNE

OF NAZARETH

GROGAN



*BORN TO EARTHLY LIFE:
MARCH 17, 1926*

*BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE:
FEBRUARY 12, 2011*

Sister Anne Grogan
Province of U.S.A. & Canada
1926 – 2011

A dedicated sister, very faithful to the Rule and her prayer life....she spoke lovingly of her family in Ireland, recounting her father's longevity and bicycle riding well into his latter years, the meals she used to prepare for the family and the many evenings they spent together reciting the rosary, a favorite prayer of hers. Her sense of frugality and order was probably honed during her time at home after the death of her mother, when she became responsible for managing the home and preparing meals. Since the only way to get groceries was by cycling several miles to the nearest store and then cycling the groceries back home she learned early on to be methodical and careful in her choices. Her devotion to her family was one of the reasons for her comparatively late entry into Cluny. Later in the convent these practical traits were so evident in her weekly shopping expedition, whether it was in the early days in California when one of the parishioners would drive her, as we did not always have a car at our disposal, or later when one of the sisters would drive her to Von's or Stop and Shop, her list was ready, she knew each aisle she wanted and there was order and dispatch in her purchasing.

Sr. Anne, along with Sr. Pius Moore and Sr. Josephine St. Leger, who were part of her group were an older group and had the opportunity to do part of their novitiate in the Motherhouse as the first group after the Second World War. For eight months at the heart of the Congregation they were trying to be French speakers. Since neither Sr. Anne nor Sr. Pius were so inclined they had many funny stories to tell of their attempts to read. Apparently they afforded our French sisters many moments of laughter and frequent "tu autems". The ability to laugh at themselves made them pleasant companions. Sr. Anne's ability with the needle landed her in the linen room where she worked "assembly line" style and did the night caps and guimpes. The less adept novices followed her with more mundane details. Returning to

Ireland they made profession on January 4, 1954, rather an unusual date, but one made necessary by the mission needs in the USA. Her first mission in the United States was to Stella Maris in Newport, R.I. a guest home for ladies. In charge of the linen room, laundry and serving for the ladies in the dining room she brought the same cheerful, willing attitude toward all. In the interim she and Sr. Pius had the opportunity to polish their culinary skills and became adept at cake making and decorating. A few years after Sr. Anne was missioned to the novitiate on Brenton Road where she was in charge of the food preparations for both the growing teaching community and the novitiate.

Despite her handicap which often made standing and walking painful for her, she never stinted on the time and preparation she put into her cooking. She was indeed, a masterful chef, in many ways. Her sponge cakes, marmalade puddings, and Baked Alaska were always favorites at dessert time. Always with an eye to poverty she would be sure to point out to some hasty novice that a good deal of the potato was being wasted....if not peeled according to her strict instructions! She could take the simplest of fare and dress it up so that one didn't even realize it was "leftovers!" There was a place for every utensil and she knew if it was in the wrong place, her kitchen was her castle in many ways and she kept it spotless and in order at all times. Sr. Anne was not only a 'magician' when it came to preparing delicious meals she had the gift (before video cameras) of knowing what was happening in her kitchen even when she wasn't there, we thought she must have had a secret alarm on the freezer at night where the ice cream was kept....open it up and Sr. Anne appeared!

Sr. Anne was noted for her hospitality and kindness when visitors arrived and the children in the school loved visiting the convent, not just to see the Chapel and where the sisters lived, but to parade through the kitchen and be rewarded with cookies from Sr. Anne. She always had time to offer a 'cup of tea" and a chat and gave an understanding ear and welcome to those who came with difficulties or problems.

As adept as she was at cooking she also had a great ability with needle and thread and she helped the novices and taught many of us how to sew and mend and repair. Her patience in this endeavor was quite remarkable even when we sewed potholders to our skirts while mending holes, or accidentally cut small holes in the scapular or veil we were making. Somehow she managed to get it right for us.

Although she wasn't a dancer she loved to listen to the Irish music on the radio in the kitchen of Cluny Convent when the Irish hour was on and her cane and feet kept time to Lawrence Welk and his music every Sunday night.

Sr. Anne had a good sense of humor and enjoyed recreation time. Despite often being in pain, especially in her later years with her disability and the encroaching pain of arthritis, she still enjoyed her time, sharing with her sisters. An 'early to bed, and early to rise' person she nevertheless gave herself as much as possible to be a companionable and pleasant community sister.

Those who were sick or in special need found in her a thoughtful and considerate Sister and she often had good advice to give those who were 'under the weather' or dealing with some difficulty. She was well aware of those who were ill and of their various needs.

Because of her own health problems she seemed to put everything she had into doing what she did to the best of her ability, making up for her decreased mobility by the creativity and care she put into her cooking. It was apparent to the novices and postulants she guided during the time she assisted in the novitiate that she took very seriously the admonition, "do the best you can and God will do the rest." She made sure that we were trying to "do the best" no matter whether it was peeling vegetables or scrubbing the counters! In this she reflected to us the importance and dignity she believed every action had, no matter how simple, because it was done for God.

The last years of her time in the United States were spent in Javouhey House and here she learned to use the newly installed elevator with ease. Even mechanical difficulties did not faze her. One hot summer Sunday, alone in the house, she found herself locked in a stalled elevator. When help did not arrive promptly she called the fire department and was delighted at their quick and pleasant rescue. Even more so when she was greeted by several neighbors, the pastor, and half the fire department. It gave her much amusement to recount.

Sr. Anne spent much time in prayer despite her many duties and she loved, especially toward the end of her life to visit a retreat house in Massachusetts called Miramar. The last retreat she was able to make in the United States was here, and although it was cut short by illness she loved the time there and made a great impression on the other retreatants by her cheerfulness and spirit of prayer.