

Eulogy: Mary Morrisroe LCM

MOTTO: Sphragis (Greek word meaning sealed ref. to baptism)



Sister Mary died early in the morning of December 23, 2022, in the loving care of the staff of Milford Care Centre, Castletroy, Limerick, where she had been so well looked after for the last five years of her life. Mary was in her eighty-eight years. Her death came as no surprise since her health was deteriorating gradually. Mary settled in to her new surroundings remarkably well and endeared herself to all staff who were very fond of her and enjoyed her witty remarks when they 'sought her advice'. As her normal memory began to slip and as her unconscious memory took over, her deep devotion to Our Lady asserted itself and day after day she could be heard saying the Hail Mary and singing 'The bells of the Angelus'.

Mary was the eldest in a family of three girls and one boy born to Thomas and Gertrude in County Galway. She is survived by her sister, Sister Bernardine, Sister of Mercy and her brother Thomas. Mary's father died as a result of a hit and run accident when she was in secondary school in Tuam, Co. Galway. After leaving school Mary worked in the Civil Service in Dublin where she first encountered the Little Company of Mary before travelling to America to work. On her return visit to Ireland, she travelled from Shannon Airport straight to Milford House for interview without informing her family of her intention to join the Little Company of Mary. Mary commenced her Novitiate training in Milford House on October 11th, 1960, and made her First Profession on October 11th 1963.

Mary trained as a General Registered Nurse in St. John's Hospital and after her Final Profession on October 11th, 1968, she was asked to go to Rome to join the Sisters in the Mother House. On returning to Ireland, she trained as a Midwife in the Medical Missionary of Mary Maternity Hospital, Drogheda, Co. Louth and then nursed in the Maternity Ward of Mount Carmel Hospital, Dublin. Mary was very progressive and keen to advance her education further. She trained as a Public Health Nurse and later continued her studies in administration. She felt drawn to work with the underprivileged and took a Ward Sister's position in Our Lady's Hospital, Phoenix Park, Dublin, for Care of the Elderly. However, her destiny lay in Limerick in St. John's Hospital, when she was asked by her superiors to become Director of Nursing. She was an excellent administrator although those who worked with her thought that the title 'Matron' suited her better which certainly highlights some of her leadership and personality attributes. When somebody came to report an incident which may have happened in a ward or elsewhere Mary would immediately tell them that it had to be a written report and not only that but it had to be Concise, Factual and Consequential meaning what were the consequences, if any, and what action needed to

be taken. No doubt, it saved hours of people beating around the bush without ever getting to the point. Mary showed her support for the Nursing Staff when she removed her blue veil and stood with them – plaque in hand – outside the gates of St. John's hospital when they sought an increase in salary. Following her retirement, she pursued spiritual studies at Washington Theological Union.

One of Mary's redeeming features was her ability to laugh at her own mistakes and she could see the humour in other situations – a great gift for diffusing situations. She was a great story teller. While Mary lived a long and full life, she also enjoyed life. She loved her game of golf and enjoyed listening to classical music and was interested in music therapy. The loss of sight in one of her eyes was a very heavy cross to bear as she loved to read. She accepted this cross with great courage and dignity.

Mary's life came to a close as the Christmas lights were referencing in some way that marvellous statement in John's Gospel – 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it'. In Christ a final victory has been won and light has forever conquered the darkness of death. So may be as the Priest who officiated at her funeral Mass remarked, it was appropriate that Mary should have died amidst the Christmas lights because she was a woman of faith who believed that the light had indeed overcome the darkness".

Mary, may you rest in peace.

Sisters Teresa Ryan, Denise Maher and Alice Culhane, St. Joseph's Convent, Limerick