

Good Morning. As we come together today, we celebrate the life of a remarkable woman who grew from being a motherless child at the age of nine to become the virtual matriarch of a large extended family of McKiernans who love her very much. Kathleen lived life as a devoted daughter of Elizabeth Seton. With a ready sense of humor, she was a comic when the spirit moved her. Professionally she could match wits with the best in nursing being a smart and savvy, dedicated nurse, nurse educator and administrator. Everyone sending messages upon hearing the news of Kathleen's death recalls her kindness, compassion, smile and easy-going nature. In her retirement she served as a generous volunteer with youth, elderly and girls and women who had been victims of human trafficking. Kathleen was a trusted friend to many and enjoyed travel and life adventures particularly with Sister Patricia Mulryan. Last Monday Kathleen's life ended as gently as a candle going out and she took her place in heaven where she delights seeing God face to face.

We met in 1963 on my first day at Saint Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing. With Sister Mary Robert and Sister Marian Catherine, Sister Kathleen who was then Sister Dolores Elizabeth welcomed the class of 1966. Those three valiant women were responsible for about 500 teenagers. Theirs was the task of making mature professional nurses out of us in three short years. At the time Sister Dolores

Elizabeth was 29 years old. At an assembly to open the school year D E as we had dubbed her stood at the edge of the stage with her feet almost over the edge and she said, "Ster Catherine, Ster Robert and I have prepared an orientation program for you." She never said the word Sister, so from that day forward to our class, and to me, she was always Ster. And she didn't mind that at all.

In the summer of 1966, Ster was transferred to Saint Vincent's Hospital Staten Island and in 1967, as a brand-new Sister of Charity I was sent to live and work at Saint Vincent's Hospital on Staten Island. We enjoyed life in a vibrant community of thirty Sisters. The superior of the house our former Mother General, Sister Loretto Bernard loved parties and music so we often entertained each other with skits and song and dance. It was then that Ster said I needed to learn some Irish dancing steps to take part fully in these festivities. She taught me how to dance the Stack of Barley. It didn't matter that she stood close to five feet tall and I was 5'9"... we danced well together.

In the late 1960s, while going to College I worked per diem at Saint Joseph's Hospital. The Director of Nursing at that time was Ster. She gave me all kinds of experiences there and the skills I learned have served me well through the years.

In 1973 Kathleen spread her wings out of Sisters of Charity ministries and began to share her knowledge and experience with the wider world. She taught at Pace University, supervised nurses at Cabrini Nursing Home and directed accreditation services for NAPNE the National Association for Practical Nursing Education. In 1991 Kathleen began a ten-year stint working for the US Federal Government in Health Care Financing.

Sisters in her circle said Kathleen was extremely considerate and even-tempered. They enjoy recalling celebrations of anniversaries with Kathleen's brother Father Vinny offering Mass for the group.

Tenants at Seton Village said they received letters from Kathleen after they had an accident with an offer of help. Many of us remember Kathleen at Ventnor. She never liked the beach but wanted to be there when friends were vacationing.

Now and then in her younger years she would stand on her head once in a while!

Nurses recall her kindness and compassion to students and when needed a caution to study or risk losing their place at Saint Vincent's. One nurse said Kathleen seemed to "come out of nowhere and sit with me as my mother was dying." We all loved having Kathleen with us.

With all her education, advanced degrees and lofty roles Kathleen never put on airs. I truly feel that Kathleen lived our community virtues of Humility, Simplicity and Charity every day through her life.

When a good friend is getting ready to return home to God, I often talk with them about the miracle of our relationship. I tell each one how lucky we are. Consider all the thousands of years, the millions of years when we might have been born and the many places we could have lived on this planet earth. When we cross paths with a soulmate, a kindred spirit who helps us to be who we are born to be, that is a gift of God.

Just a few months ago Kathleen asked me to be her health care proxy and she attached a note to say, I promise to go quickly and quietly. And she did.

So, dear Aunt Kathleen, D E, Kathleen, Ster although you were small and I am tall, I always looked up to you.

Go in peace to rest in the arms of our loving God who is so happy to have you back home in heaven! We love you, always have and always will!

AUF WIEDERSEHEN!

September 4, 2020