

Vigil Service
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Provincial Leader

As we honor our beloved Sister today, we are aware that Mary was held in God's love billions of years ago when a burst of universal energy began all life. This love story of God dwelling among us led to another significant moment, Mary's birth to her parents, Michael and Susan, in Trepassey in July of 1936. We move now to another sacred moment, Mary's earthly farewell on 15 January, and, in all these years we catch glimpses of the beauty of Mary's life.

A Scripture passage from her Golden Jubilee ritual reads: *"Long before we first heard of Christ, He had designs on us for glorious living."* Christ, to whom Mary had vowed her life, had designs on her for glorious living. We have all witnessed that joy and delight were so much part of Mary's beauty as were her more difficult moments of anxiety and depression.

Having visited Mary last Thursday when she was suffering severe discomfort, I felt helpless and wished I could take her pain away. That, of course, was beyond my ability, but, when I saw her on Friday, I sensed that she had already begun a journey to a place of new beauty. Surrounded by her family, friends and Sisters, the ones she loved so much, Mary had all the company that she had so much craved during her lifetime.

And we all remember Mary's jokes and stories. Lois Greene writes, *"Every time I visited Mary on the Nano Nagle Floor, I left her room with a smile."* And many of us know about Mary's fear of birds. In Miriam Martin's words: *"Who will ever forget the birds flying from Peter to Paul in the Basilica and the domino effect at the altar rail as Floss pushed into Sister Nano Parsley for protection, tipping the whole communion line over! Would that we could all laugh at ourselves as easily as Mary could!"*

Mary as teacher. She wrote: *"I've been a primary teacher for so long that my ability to compose and construct sentences has been somewhat impaired."* And, speaking of her young students: *"Where else would one find such creativity, such openness to truth and such undaunted trust? Who else but a young child could have John the Baptist arrested by RCMP officers with their blue and red lights flashing brightly?"* She continues: *"My years in the classroom have never been a burden but a delight and my not too cheerful, anxious days have been made more bearable by the smiles and wise sayings of young children."* Yes, Mary appreciated the special gifts of children and they were part of her mosaic of *"glorious living"*.

Now the same God who carried Mary all these years has taken her peacefully home. Sharon Fagan writes: *"I am grateful to Mary for sharing her willingness to let go and for her courage to trust that the God who called her into life would walk with her into new life."* Indian poet, Tagore, says: *"Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark."* Mary lived that faith.

As we say farewell to Mary until we meet again, we know that there is a rich laughter echoing out in our vast universe as Mary now enjoys eternal delight.

Rest in gentle peace, dear Mary.