

# REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF SR. BETTY DANIELS

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NL Provincial Leader

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Elizabeth Frances Daniels, known to **us** simply as Betty, was born to Bridget and Francis Daniels, in Bishop's Falls on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1932. As I wrote that date, I recalled that in Ireland it was thought that anyone born in that year was very holy because it was the Year of the Eucharistic Congress! And I held that thought for Betty ... she was a holy woman in the best sense of the word.

Betty was a member of a family of twelve. The last sibling now is Tom in BC, and we send sympathy and love to him now as he mourns the loss of his sister. We also sympathise with Betty's nieces and nephews, grand and great grand nieces and nephews, as you say goodbye to your lovely Auntie. She dearly loved her family. You, her nieces and nephews, brought her great joy throughout her entire life. She spoke so lovingly of you all. You certainly can be proud to be of the same stardust as Auntie Betty.

Betty joined the Presentation Sisters in 1951. She made her vows of Celibacy, Poverty and Obedience in 1957. This means she lived the Presentation Way of life, embodying the spirit of Nano Nagle for 74 years. What a lifetime of service!

She taught in many places all over the Island, and no doubt touched the lives of all those with whom she came in contact. She will be remembered for her life of dedication as a teacher, school administrator, parish minister, and as spiritual guide and facilitator to so, so many. The Port au Port Peninsula had a star!

I met Betty about 10 years ago when I first came to Newfoundland. I recognised immediately a woman far beyond her years in theology and spirituality. She was a gentle woman with a beautiful smile and took great joy in telling me about the faithfulness of her groups ... her faithful companions along the road of life. I know from meeting these people how much they thought of Betty ... how she impacted their lives in all aspects. Her love and care of the environment and Mother Earth carried her through the many years of her journey at Steel Mountain Spirituality Centre, and the Nano Nagle Spirituality Centre in Barachois Brook. She was an amazing woman, a loyal friend and a woman of deep gratitude. She was a people person and radiated such love and peace. She led Prayer Groups, Book Clubs, had a party with them on occasions, as she told me one time “Roisin, I had a bash for my birthday!” I was amused by the word **bash** and she loved retelling that story because of the smile she put on my face! A modern slang word for a woman of 90!

She was even using YOU TUBE to portray content of the NEW STORY. Betty lived and breathed the NEW STORY ... she believed God was in every particle of the Universe and that we, each of us, is an intricate part of the huge Universe. Through her own ALIVE spirituality Betty brought this great Universe to life without forcing any issue. She lived it.

She believed "The human is neither an addendum nor an intrusion into the universe. We are quintessentially integral with the universe." (Thomas Berry, "The Earth Story")

When Betty first went to the West Coast, she worked in the parish of Doyles. She officiated at Baptisms, weddings and funerals. The story is told of two men discussing the change in the Church since this **NUN** arrived! One said to the other: "My son ... she got power". "Yes" replied the other, "she can make a funeral more interesting than the Evening News."

When she officiated at a wedding, there was no end to her preparation. She wanted everything to be perfect for the couple and of course with Betty's artistic touch, the couple walked and sat into a work of art. Typical Betty.

Betty was a joy filled lady, always seeing the glass half full. She was courageous and brave and graciously knew and accepted when it was time to leave Barachois Brook and her lovely friends there. I stayed a few days with her in the Nano Nagle Centre, and I was humbled by this beautiful woman wanting everything to be just right. The table was set and laid most artistically, the best china was used, and she had

shopped to have some nice ingredients for delicious meals. This little woman of 90! She was so looking forward to having her own apartment in the Motherhouse. Yes, she had it for some time and decorated it according to her own impeccable taste. "The earth has music for those who listen" (Shakespeare) and Betty heard music all the time.

Some weeks ago, when she was diagnosed with cancer she accepted it bravely. She was at peace. Her comment was "I know God is with me, so I am at peace".

Betty, the Universe is in your bones,  
The stars in your soul,  
It's never really the end.

Betty, you continue to live and smile in your new and enhanced life where you now know the secrets of what you lived and loved all your years. We thank you for being that person of joy, who added so much light to the stars. We ask you to smile on and with us now, guide us on the path ahead and help us always to hear the music of the Universe. Our memories of you are as dear as you are to us. Rest now Betty, no more pain or discomfort, just peace and music.