

REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF SR. CARMEL KELLY
February 11, 1933 – October 18, 2025
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We come together today to celebrate the life of Carmel, Sr. Carmel Kelly, a Presentation Sister here in Newfoundland and Labrador, for 71 years. A long life of commitment!

An Anglican Minister once said:

“Death is nothing at all.

I have only slipped away to the next room” ... and Carmel, like so many more has just slipped into the next room.

Carmel was born in St. John’s on 11th February 1933. She was a member of a family of 9, born to Alice Crain and John Kelly. Carmel is the last of the 9. My knowledge of Carmel is only from sitting and chatting with her...I never lived with her. Always during our chats, I was conscious of two things....her quick witty remarks...always hitting the nail on the head, and what a lady she was.

Carmel was a dedicated Teacher and Principal in many places. She taught in Carbonear, Port au Port, Badger, Cape St. George, Mary Q of the World, St. Bride’s, Harbour Main, Windsor, Harbour Grace. She also ministered in XH Corner Brook, Dominica West Indies, and the Motherhouse here. So if that is not a lifetime of commitment to the Charism, ethos of Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters, I throw my hat at it!! She was a most generous woman and had no hesitation in sharing her talents and time. True to Nano Nagle, Carmel spent her life advocating for the less fortunate.

There are many memories of Carmel and all of them have that sense of fun which made Carmel who she was. While ministering in XH, where she was greatly loved, a picnic was arranged. She was a named driver for some of the residents. Off they journeyed singing and happy, to the park in Lark Harbour. Carmel had no sense of direction! So instead of the Park they landed in the Cemetery!! But they got as much fun out of relating this story as the other residents got out of the Park.

The Anglican Minister put words in the mouth of the deceased,

“Laugh as we always laughed
at the little jokes we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me.”

Carmel, I believe you are having a giggle with us now! So many of your stories bring a smile to our faces.

Carmel loved decorating for any occasion. Christmas was a big one so she began early finding her helper elves and methodically turning the house into a fairyland. She was even heard singing Christmas Carols in August! She loved doing this too during her years on the Nano Nagle Floor.

One of our staff remembers her in the following way:

Sister Carmel will be remembered by her kindness, generosity, and love of planning a party. Many of us remember working alongside side Carmel on NNF; helping serve meals, driving and shopping. We often joked with Sr Carmel that she didn't have time to listen to our finishing the sentence. When we requested help, she would already have left to complete the errand before we turned around. So much energy!

Sr Carmel will also be remembered for her love of decorating the Christmas trees. Often on night shift, Sr Carmel would come in at 3:30am to NNF looking for a bed, (when she lived upstairs), as she was up late decorating her beloved Community Room tree and didn't want to wake the Sisters on her floor by going back upstairs.

I could go on with memories of her. One, that I will never forget is when I escorted Sister to an appointment. When the receptionist called her name, she looked up with tears rolling down her cheek. She said, "Sr Carmel you may not remember me, but I will never forget you". Sister Carmel had taken care of her at 50 Bonaventure, Presentation House (Emergency Children's Centre). She stated she would never forget what sister had done for her.

"A life beautifully lived deserves to be beautifully remembered".

I have heard nothing only good of Carmel. Her generosity, kindness, talents, fun, wit, how she loved to play bowling with the Residents of XH,

how she loved to visit with family, her love of the poor children and how she fed them. She certainly was a true Presentation Sister.

Carmel's love of TV was well known. She could relax from the cares of the world through watching TV. The remote control was very important to her. She loved the game shows. As one Sister said she would watch TV all night.

Carmel, thank you for the laughs, thank you for being that great woman carrying Nano's lantern where ever you lived. Help us now to carry our lanterns as true followers of Nano. You were a Party Girl! Our faith tells us there is a party in Heaven where all our Presentation Sisters are dancing and singing your welcome. God bless you Carmel and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.