

## **REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF SR. TERESA DEVINE**

December 1, 1926 – October 24, 2025

by Roisin Gannon, pbvm

PBVM NL Unit Leader

October 2025

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Gospel of John 1.

There was a woman sent from God whose name was Teresa. She was not the light but she came to bear witness to the light”

We gather this evening to celebrate the life of our beloved Teresa Devine. We are here to give thanks to God for this woman who bore witness to the light.

Teresa was born on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1926, to James Devine and Mary Ann Berrigan, in Renews, Newfoundland. She one of 3 children, a brother Michael, and a sister Celine. Both have predeceased her. We have here her beloved nieces and nephews and extended family, whom she loved dearly and who kept vigil for so long with their much love Teresa. She will continue to be the light in your lives.

Teresa joined the Presentation Congregation on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1944 and made Final Vows on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1950. Figuring the maths, we conclude that Teresa followed the Presentation Way of life for 78 years. What a long life of dedication and commitment. She was given the name of Sister Madeleine James. This was after Mary of Magdala in the Gospel...a faithful follower of Jesus. The comments on her obituary all speak about her kindness and care, her faithfulness and dedication. How appropriate the name was for our Sister.

Teresa’s commitments to ministry over the years read like a Newfoundland travelogue. She taught and led in Trepassey, Windsor, Badger, Grand Falls, Stephenville, Carbonear, Brent’s Cove, Torbay, Mount Pearl, Witless Bay. She provided Pastoral Care in the Grace Hospital here in St. John’s. I met some people during Mary’s Wake and they talked about how Teresa prayed with and comforted a loved one during their stay in the Grace. The patients loved to see her coming.

24<sup>th</sup> October is the feast of Arch Angel Raphael. I know Teresa was an Angel for her family...but Teresa was no lowly Angel...she was an Arch Angel. So 24<sup>th</sup> was a fitting day for her departure.

Teresa was a woman who was centred in God as her alpha and omega, who faced the dark and the light of her personal faith journey, with a slow and steady movement, trusting in God's provident care. This trust does not come easily to any of us. It contains many moments of woundedness, vulnerability and pain as well as experiences of joy and delight. There was an almost invincibility about Teresa. As we waited by her bedside, her determination did not ebb and she took her time in saying goodbye. The song comes to my mind.....I did it my way!!!

For almost a century, we were privileged to call Teresa, sister, sister-in-law, aunt, great aunt, teacher and friend. Teresa was a gentle woman, always grateful for all she had, along with the care she received as she became more dependant. Her spirit of gratitude was profound. That was her life.

One of my observations of Teresa was how truly interested she was in the affairs of the Congregation. Her age did not matter, her aches did not matter, but the Congregation mattered. She was a true Presentation Sister to the end.

On Tuesday evening after the Funeral of Sr. Mary White, we were all both physically and mentally drained. A second funeral so close to Carmel's and we knew there was another one on the horizon. I went home that evening and made a cup of tea. I sat in my chair and prayed a while. Then I put on you tube and looked for a brainless movie. My brain needed some kind of non-thinking distraction. I saw THE VELVETEEN RABBIT noted and thought..." ah just what I need". I had read the book by Margery Williams many years ago. It is a beautiful story of a boy who found a velvet rabbit in his grandmother's attic. Since he had just lost his mother, he was looking for someone to love. This was the answer. In the course of the story, the rabbit comes to life and the boy and Rabbit could talk together, have fun filled with magic. One of the lines that hopped out at me was "it is not love that changes everything, it is loving". And that is Teresa...she spent her life loving those who needed it.

Another quote from that beautiful story is "our stories go on forever". How true! Teresa's story will go on forever. She will be talked about around the

fire, on the patio, on big celebration days. Her story goes on forever. “the tear the rabbit cries when he's at his lowest point brings transformative magic, highlighting the importance of vulnerability”. We are all vulnerable.

And finally, the light of Teresa's fidelity and love down the long years, has impacted us so very much. We have a lot to live up to.....but we know you are there to guide us and direct us. This is not the end...it is a new beginning and you in your new life will continue to take care of us.

Teresa, it was a privilege to know you and walk the journey of Presentation life with you. We thank you for your long years of commitment and dedication. We will miss you and all your lovely qualities. We ask that you continue to walk with us, to make sure Nano takes care of us and guides us to carry our lanterns as you carried yours. Thank you for being the woman of the light. And until we meet again may God hold you in the palm of his/her hand. God bless you Teresa as you journey to your new and real home.