

Reflection for Sister Clarice Carlson July 17, 2020

1 Samuel 2: 1 – 10 and Luke 1: 39 - 56

Offer condolences to family

“God cannot be outdone in generosity.”

This was part of a message Sister Clarice received from a Sister, perhaps, when she answered God’s call to become a Sister of Divine Providence.

Clarice had a special devotion to Mary and choosing the readings for her Liturgy was quite simple. I wasn’t aware of these words of wisdom, and with the help of Maura Luffy, we chose the Magnificat which was just proclaimed.

According to Clarice, her grandmother had the most influence on her in her life for she was her role model as a woman of faith. I would imagine Clarice grew to love Mary from the time she was a child due to her grandmother’s inspiration.

Mary’s Song of Praise may have been the inspiration for the simple wisdom of the maxim **God cannot be outdone in generosity.**

Clarice was a beneficiary of God’s generosity throughout her life and she freely shared it with others.

MAGNIFICAT

Clarice’s life mirrored, in her own unique way, the wisdom proclaimed by Mary. Let’s look at a few of Mary’s proclamations in light of Clarice’s life and ministry through the stories shared by others who knew her.

Hannah’s Song of Thanksgiving from the Book of Samuel is a foreshadowing of the words Mary spoke in the Magnificat. Both, Hannah and Mary, **proclaim God’s greatness and they are found rejoicing in the God of their Salvation.**

Sister Agnes Raible noted that she and Clarice were together at St. Anne's in Castle Shannon their first year out teaching. Their bedroom had a window looking down on the sanctuary of the Church. And, before they retired they would open the window and say "goodnight" to Jesus. What a wonderful remembrance of Clarice's simplicity and love for Jesus.

Clarice was a woman of faith, searching, deepening her relationship with God through prayer and days of retreat, and celebrating God's presence in her life. She was a searching woman, desiring to learn more and, in the latter years of her life aware of her health concerns, she entrusted herself into the care of our Provident God.

Your regard has blessed me, poor and a serving woman ~

Clarice knew she was blessed and she blessed others during her life. Sister Josephine Macias told the story that Clarice was a letter writing companion with her mother for many years. She brought joy and smiles "across the miles" with each letter. Josephine expressed her gratitude for Clarice's kindness and the blessings she brought to her mom.

You have filled the hungry with good things ~

Clarice devoted time in simple service by making PPJ sandwiches for the poor and homeless people.

She had a special love for La Posada, our ministry to refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers located in Texas. Sister Zita noted that "Every time I returned to Pittsburgh for a visit, Sister Clarice would always assure me of her prayers and frequently, I would find under my door an envelope containing a few dollars from gifts she had received."

Mary sang about God's mercy and lifting up the powerless ~

Mercy, compassion, and patience were evident in her teaching and counseling career.

Clarice ministered in education for 47 years, in elementary and high schools and the last 20 at La Roche [College] University with some students who needed a lot of tender loving care. Her work with the students at LRU was remarkable, according to Sister Rita Yeasted. Students graduated because Clarice helped them as first-year students to pass a math course—or a series of other courses over their years at La Roche.

A student tutor at La Roche was touched by Clarice's giving nature. She had a wealth of patience with the students. And, I would have to say, because I was with her at LRU that she lifted many students' spirits because she believed in them and their ability to succeed.

You lifted people's spirits and was present to others ~

As Mary spent time with Elizabeth, she attended to the needs of others. Sister Leona shared that when she was ministering in Minnesota, she received a call from Clarice asking if she could come and spend her vacation with her. Clarice shared that she did this with Sisters who were at a distance so that she would see where they were, how they lived, and what their ministry involved. What a wonderful gift of presence as she brought joy to the Sisters she visited.

Sisters saw in Clarice the same spirit of Mother Marie de la Roche. As she led a quiet life of service to others, always remaining true to the promises she had made at her profession, Clarice had done the same.

CONCLUSION

On her Golden Jubilee Questionnaire, Clarice wrote "I was told when I answered God's call that 'God cannot be outdone in generosity.' Now that I have been a religious sister for 50 years I know from my experience over all these years that this is true. I have never regretted my decision to follow God's call."

We know Clarice that you are living in the loving embrace of our Provident God. And we are blessed that you have been a Woman of Providence for 71 years knowing the truth that our Provident God is indeed very generous.

You were an inspiration to many who met you and came to know you in your life's journey. Your pleasant smile, your kind and caring presence touched many. You lifted people's spirits and served so many in your own quiet and gentle ways.

We thank you for your dedication and steadfastness, your kindness and simplicity of heart that were so visible to all of us and most especially, your family.

Lead Sisters in the proclamation of the Vow Formula

Sister Donna Marie Gribschaw
July 17, 2020