

## Sister Julia Costello...Eulogy

I welcome you today to County Longford, Ireland, to the home of Julia Costello. Julia, a young woman, stands at her kitchen window, looking out at the River Shannon, flowing gently by, as she admires the blooming daffodils surrounding her home.

Let's listen to Julia introduce herself: "My roots go deep and far back into an Irish farming community in pre-WW2 days. I was certainly a much wanted baby, having arrived just one year after the deaths of two infant sisters, but also spoiled and overprotected. I attended the local national school and had a haphazard high school education. Education was very important to me. "

In these next years Julia enters religious life with the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, and prepares for a teaching career in the Los Angeles area. Here we find Julia responding to some unique circumstances with a cool head. She had been assured that she would be teaching in one of the local grammar schools in the L.A. area. But due to some unforeseen circumstances, she has been assigned to a kindergarten class of Japanese children in the basement of the DMJ school, Morning Star. Luckily, she is aided by Mrs. Miamoto, a DMJ friend. Julia falls in love with SF and teaches there for the next nineteen years, while at the same time pursuing her education in SF colleges. A former student from one of those grammar schools still keeps in touch with Julia, even this month sending her a birthday card.

Now, in the (1960's) Julia had returned to L.A. and spent some time teaching at St. Bernard H.S. Another surprise was in the books for Julia. She was assigned to be responsible for the formation of six lively novices in the Irish Novitiate, Co. Longford. We have heard that at times her patience was tried, but everyone persevered. And she has said that the New Jerusalem Bible was a lifesaver. Today we have Sr. Mary Carmel Walsh in our midst. And two others of that group have served in our general government.

Way to go, Julia.

By this time it was obvious that Julia was an exceptional DMJ, willing and able to answer many needs. Our newly formed Mary and Joseph Retreat Center was in its early stages and in need of a moderator. Another Sister had been assigned, and Julia was her assistant. Surprisingly, the moderator announced that she was no longer in charge. She was in the process of leaving the Center and the Order. So, in a matter of minutes, Julia became Moderator, with all the accompanying duties. It was quite a list, but Julia accepted and MJRC was alive and active.

Now, it was time for Julia to take a sabbatical, a time away to refresh and renew, and prepare for the next spiritual adventure. At one of the Jesuit Retreat Centers she prepared for a new retreat ministry at MJRC. She described it as spiritual direction, a way of accompanying a person to develop and grow in his prayer life, and to become closer to God. This was a new prayer experience for many people. Julia explained it as "soul friend," in Gaelic "-anam cara."

At this time Julia says she was inspired by the Holy Spirit to become involved with the Interfaith Community. This multi-faith event honored those who had lost their lives in the Holocaust. She and others were responsible for celebrating the first Kristallnacht gathering in this area. This ecumenical community, Dawn Unity, continues today. We are privileged to have two members of the original group with us here, Msgr. David Sork and Robert Rothman.

Surprising as it may seem, Julia has reached the time where we, DMJs, acknowledge that our days of active ministry are coming to an end and we find our place in Marian Residence. This was true for Julia, too. Even with failing eyesight and slower step she was still active. Her prayer ministry covered a vast expanse; her interest in local and world affairs and her caring thoughts for the suffering world ... involved us too.

BUT ABOVE ALL...Julia's love and care for her family in Ireland was super. I became her scribe, we sent weekly e-mails, and waited for replies. Always, her loving sister Celine was thought about ...and regularly got a letter. Her care for the family extended all the way to the youngest baby.

We must not forget...Julia loved poetry...she could finish any poem. In honor of Julia as a poetess, we have a special Mortuary card and the poem, Daffodils, on the inside cover of our booklet.

Please join me in the last verse of "Daffodils."

Thank you, Julia