

Sr. Frances Fisher (Eulogy)

Good Morning!

Please turn your calendar back some years...to the 1930's...place: Culver City. Enter a handsome young gentleman with his lovely wife, and their bright-eyed and excited six-year-old daughter. This is the Fisher Family: Henry, Clementine, and their bright daughter, Frances. They hail from Waco, Texas - a place they are very proud of. They are also proud of their Czeck background.

A wonderful meeting is about to take place. Culver City is the home of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, who are religious teachers at St. Augustine's parish school. They are delighted at the prospect of a new student and parents who are eager to be part of the school and parish. At a later date the family will be joined by Frances' younger sisters, Henrietta and Bessie.

So now please reset your calendars...we are moving on. The Fisher parents are a vital part of the life of the DMJ's...and Frances enrolls in St. Augustine School, graduates from there, and also graduates from Immaculate Heart High School.

No big surprise...Frances enters with our DMJ Sisters, the first graduate from St. Augustine School and parish. Education and teaching were a top priority for her...her education background was extensive: MA in history and religious studies; counseling and psychology, along with teaching credentials. The words of our Founder guided her; "Be there for the whole Church, be there as a pardoned sinner."

From the 1950's to 2004, when she retired, Frances had taught in 10 schools, especially high schools in Northern and Southern California. In the 1950's, many of our DMJ's came from Ireland to enter the exciting world of teaching and many of us lived and taught along with Frances. What we remember about her is her commitment to community life, her kindness, her caring spirit, and her graciousness.

I observed her teaching style when we were at St. Augustine's...and again when she taught at Cathedral HS. This was the last school she taught

at...what a wonderful experience. She came home each night full of excitement about the staff, the administration, and her “boys.”

As Frances retired from teaching, we would expect her to take life easy...maybe stay in bed later or take a trip. But she is still guided by the advice of being there for the whole Church. She is ready, having taken courses in preparation for retirement. So we find her attending to the needs of people outside of the classroom. At this time her mother is aging and in need of help. Frances devotes loving attention to the care of her mother, even takes her on a vacation trip.

During two summers she devoted time to the boys at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall for boys in Downey and at the L.A. Archdiocese she spent two years in the Marriage Tribunal Office as an advocate for marriage issues. Besides these assignments she also did individual counseling. One of her papers indicated that she was taking two classes, 100 hours of Spanish at Berlitz, and 27 hours of Computer Literacy for Teachers, both taken toward helping people in need. Just in case that was not enough, a family wonders whether she might be available for babysitting a young boy. Yes, she would be delighted...it was a wonderful experience!

Now she could really retire! Even when we use this word, it did not mean anything to Frances. She still maintained her interest in life when she lived at our lovely Marian Residence. Many times she regaled us with stories from her Czech ancestry.

Frances spent the last 31/2 years of her life at St. John of God Nursing Home and was well cared for. We visited her in person and by phone. Of course Covid interrupted the visits.

In October, we received word that Frances was not doing well. Then the news came that she was close to death. On October 13, Sr. Nuala and I went to visit her and soon realized that she was dying. For me it was a miracle to be with her at this time.

We sat with her, talked to her, prayed, sang and held her hand. Frances was peaceful – breathing gently. Some of the care givers came in to say good bye. One caregiver especially was so kind and gentle. He talked to her and gently put his fingers on her eyes. Later he came back with his cell

phone with a picture depicting a well dressed and smiling Frances on her last birthday. Frances died at 3:15 that day.

The presence of these caregivers was a true reminder of her being there for the whole Church. She is now being welcomed into her new home with joy. Amen.

May you rest in peace.

Sr. Catherine Sullivan, DMJ