

EULOGY FOR MARGARET MARY HALLER, DMJ
(February 17, 1932—November 11, 2023)

Margaret Mary Haller entered the Daughters of Mary and Joseph in 1953 and made her first vows in 1956. In the next 67 years of her religious life, we, DMJs and so many other people, came to know and experience this “*bigger than life*” woman through her varied ministries and in community life.

Whether Margaret Mary was involved in education, administration, Community leadership, religious formation, pastoral work, outreach to the poor and marginalized, or in daily life, she left her “*stamp*” on all those she encountered. Her sense of humor and zest for life and people was infectious!

How does one speak about such a dedicated and zealous woman religious? With the help of Margaret Mary’s many friends, I will try to highlight some of her memorable qualities.

Margaret Mary was truly interested in everyone she met, whether friend or stranger. She always wanted to know what was going on and she didn’t hesitate to find out!

- ❖ Her DMJ Sisters at Rose Ave. shared that when Margaret Mary went out for a walk around the neighborhood, which she often did, she would return with the “news” of the neighbors, whether she had just met them or had frequently encountered them.
- ❖ In Ghana, West Africa, where for the past 20 years Margaret Mary made her annual pilgrimage to live with the people in our DMJ Mission to the leper community, our Sisters there reflected: “Each day Margaret Mary walked around the compound, meeting the various people who lived in the area. As was her style, she would stop and chat with each one. Even though they didn’t understand her language—nor she theirs—they knew she loved them. Love was the only language that mattered!”
- ❖ Margaret Mary taught at St. Bernard’s High School in the 1960’s. She taught Home Economics, Religion and Drama, and was the Advisor to the Alumni Association. Upon hearing of Margaret Mary’s passing, some former students wrote, remembering how she was the “life of the school”. She

- attended every football game, vigorously cheering on the Vikings. Lovingly the students referred to her as “Sr. Viking”!
- ❖ As Novice Director, Margaret Mary was concerned that the Novices had a well-rounded formation, and experienced more than what could be learned on the “Hill”. Besides following their regular courses of study, these young women experienced pottery making, silk screening, trips to the Hollywood Bowl, and outreach to the poor. They set up a summer camp, “Camp High Hopes”, for underprivileged children in San Pedro, and often delivered food to the needy. As one former novice recalls, “Margaret Mary was full of fun and laughter, had a wonderful sense of humor, and made sure that laughter was part of our experience!”
 - ❖ Community, people being together and knowing they were loved, was very important to Margaret Mary. She was always the first to volunteer to plan a gathering, whether for a birthday, wedding, holiday, funeral, whatever the occasion.

Margaret Mary was a woman of vision, one who saw beyond established boundaries, a woman of deep prayer. It was this energy that drove her in her outreach to the poor and marginalized, a trailblazer, always striving to make things better for others.

She:

- ❖ joined with a group of religious women in the Los Angeles area to address the challenges of social justice;
- ❖ was present among the Indigenous people in British Columbia, Canada and in New Mexico.
- ❖ supported the ministry of St. Joseph’s Center in Venice
- ❖ participated in the DMJ mission in Ghana, by physically being present to the children and adults, and, in California, by organizing funds to support this ministry
- ❖ wholeheartedly took part in the planning and building of Marian Residence, our retirement center, and became its first Director.

Margaret Mary loved spending time with her family. As one of her friends said, “She loved her family ‘to the moon and back!’” She was always sharing news about them, both the joys and sorrows. Over the years, when Margaret Mary was planning to visit someone in her

family, she often would invite some of us to come along and meet them.

In expressing the gratitude for Margaret Mary's presence in Ghana, one Sister wrote a message to you, her family: "To her sisters, Anne, Rosalie, Patti, and her brother Daniel, we offer our thanks for sharing her. To her nieces and nephews, whom she loved dearly and who supported our mission in Ghana so generously through her stories, we hope you continue to be the wonderful people she knew you to be."

The name Margaret means "pearl". Margaret Mary was truly "a pearl of great price", one whose friendship and spirit we will truly treasure throughout our lives. How blessed we are to have known her, to have had her be a part of our lives.

Margaret Mary, we know you are resting in the peace, joy and love of our compassionate God and celebrating in the fullness of life.

Thank you

Linda Webb, December 7, 2023