

Sister Anne McCluskey, SNJM (January 15, 1923 - June 27, 2016)

Before the world began, God chose Anne in Christ to be holy and blameless and to be full of love! There is plenty of evidence in the life of Anne McCluskey that she knew that! Even as a very young child, during Mass she would scoot herself over in the pew to be beside someone who had just received Holy Communion because she believed that would bring her closer to Jesus.

Even though Anne was gifted spiritually, and was aware of that, she was so humble that she never took that gift for granted. Throughout her life, Anne intentionally begged for, opened herself to and shared God's grace, freely given! And don't we all know that!

Like Mary, Anne kept so many things in her heart, and pondered them---special conversations, Scripture passages, songs and hymns. And however rich her ponderings were, she always knew there was more, and she knew it because Jesus placed the dream of more in her heart. Anne's desire for Jesus was her passion.

Jesus was the composer, orchestrator, conductor of the symphony of her life, and Anne played all the instruments:

the laughter of the piccolo,

the wit of the flute,

ideas the size of a bass,

prayer as deep as a tuba,

her steady march forward in life according to her own drumbeat,

the moods of the strings--bowed or plucked,

the flexibility of a slide trombone, the ability to make piano music move from the clarity of the black and white to every shade of an inclusive gray—

Anne could even sigh in chords!

She was concertmaster of them all!

And the rests were for mystery books, crossword puzzles, card games, FreeCell, puns, caramels and jelly bellies!

She was ever aware of her part in the beautiful music of the universe!

And still she begged, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!" "Rabbi, I want to see!"

I want to see your face!

I want to see the way forward!

I want to see peace and justice in our world!

I want to see the needs of my Sisters!

I want to see the gifts in my students!

I want to see the Spirit working in you, in me!

I want to see the lame leap, the deaf hear, the blind see!

I want to see the Good News proclaimed in every way!

I want to see the words on the page!

I want to see opportunity for all God's people!

I want to see the faces of those I love!

I want to see your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven!
I want to see Marie Rose, Solanus, my parents, my brothers and sisters,
I want to see what lies ahead!
I want to see your true self!
I want to see your face, and yours, and yours...
I want to see my true self!
I want to see Jesus!

Anne's blindness was only physical, but isn't it ironic that it should have been at all! Perhaps a gift of Anne's failing eyesight was the deepening of her spiritual vision, the depth of her intuition, her joy at hearing the Word of God read to her, the ease of slipping into contemplation.

At one point during Anne's final journey, her breathing changed significantly and her heart was literally banging against her chest wall, and her eyes were wide open and absolutely focused beyond the room where we were. Was she saying "Jesus, I want to see!" And was Jesus giving her a glimpse? I thought surely she would leave us then, but that stubborn little Irish Lady that lived inside of Anne, the one who would not let go, gave one more try at clinging to this life, this rich, full wonderful life. It is not surprising that something in Anne's Spirit clung to this life—Anne chose life at every opportunity, whether for fun, spiritual enrichment, something tasty, visits, relationships! It took another day for Anne to get control of that hanger-on and fly free! And I feel freer myself in her freedom! That was Anne's way. Her faith has healed her into fullness of life. "God has taken pleasure in revealing the mystery of the plan through Christ, namely, to bring all things—in heaven and on earth—together in Christ!"

All the people, all of us, are witnesses, and we give praise to God!
Amen?
Amen!

(Homily composed and presented by Sister Mary Ann Farley, SNJM, at Funeral Mass 7-11-16)