

Remembering Sister Margaret Pray

1925 - 2020



*"our oneness in Christ extends
beyond this life,
the bond of community
unites us even after death"
(Const. #59/d.31)*

Sister Margaret Pray (Margaret Aimee), formerly Sister Mary Kevin, a member of the Ursulines of Chatham for 73 years, died peacefully on March 5, 2020. Margaret was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario, the daughter of Howard and Eva (Donlon) Pray and sister of Howard and Patrick. She attended St. Clare's School and St. Mary's Academy before entering the Hotel Dieu Hospital School of Nursing. After receiving her registered nurse's certification she continued to work at Hotel Dieu Hospital for a short time before entering the Ursuline Novitiate in Chatham on February 23, 1947. She took her first vows on August 28, 1949 and was finally professed three years later. For thirty years she ministered as a nurse at Brescia, Glengarda and The Pines, caring for both Sisters and students. During many of these years she took summer courses at Notre Dame and the School of Theology at St. Norbert's College in Wisconsin.

When Sister Margaret retired from nursing in 1983 she chose a new path to use her gifts. She turned her skills to writing. Over the next decades she produced a Community Newsletter and the "Tree of Life", a summary of a Sister's journey and a record of the way her life, death, and entrance into eternal life were marked by the Community. These tributes were shared with the members of the Community, family members and friends.

Margaret spent over a decade of her life researching and writing the history of the Ursulines of Chatham. After years of dedicated work, her two volume Pilgrims in Service was printed and the book launch was held on December 3, 2001 in the Round Room at the Pines.

In her retirement years at Villa Angela, Sister Margaret took special pleasure in her daily walks around the property with her dear friend, Sister Barbara Anne. Margaret delighted in the beauties of nature, especially in spring's first signs of new life.

Her wry sense of humour and her deep sense of gratitude were evident right up to the time of her death.

She is lovingly remembered by her Sisters in Community, her sister-in-law Catherine, her nephews Kevin (Marjorie), John (Debbie), Robert (Koreen), niece Laura (Michael), their families, and her friends of many decades, Marlene and Tony Bedard.

Celebration of Sister Margaret Pray's Life

Sister Margaret's "Celebration of Life" and Mass of Resurrection were prepared by her good friend, Sister Frances Ryan. The first reading from the wake service began with the story from Matthew's gospel account of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and continued with Margaret's own reflection in which Jesus empowered a serving girl with the ability to read. The second reading from the Ursuline Constitutions contained the section about "pilgrims in service", the title of Margaret's history of the Ursulines of Chatham. Sister Sheila McKinley delivered the reflection which she based on Margaret's poem, "When I Go to Heaven I Shall Dance with God".

Father Paul Duplessie was the presider at the Mass of Resurrection. He stated in his homily that we all have the same call to love God and our neighbor as the First Reading outlined. He also referred to Margaret's desire to dance with God, a tradition well-established in the Hebrew Scriptures which described David dancing before the Lord with all his might.

The pall bearers were two Sisters and four friends of the Villa Angela Community. The prayers at the cemetery were led by Sister Theresa Campeau and the crucifix from Margaret's casket will be taken by the family to Catherine, Margaret's sister-in-law, who was not able to be present.



*The Spirit at work in our hearts
leads us to live in freedom,
as did Angela and Mother Xavier
LeBihan
to become **pilgrims in service**
mobile and flexible,
responding to the signs of the times.*