

Remembering Sister Claire St. Pierre

1937 - 2020



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

Sister Claire St. Pierre (Claire Marie), formerly Sister Agnes Claire, died peacefully in the early morning of August 21st, accompanied in her final hours by her sister Cecile, brother-in-law Jim and Sister Theresa. Members of the Community and her family had been keeping vigil with Claire for many days. Sister Claire, the daughter of the late Ulric and Rillie, was born on May 23, 1937 and entered the Ursuline Community and made her final vows on December 28, 1965. Qualified with both English and bilingual teaching certificates, she served many years as a creative and caring teacher in various schools in southwestern Ontario. Following her teaching years, she was part of the local leadership team at The Pines and played a significant role in the transition to the new Ursuline home at 20 Merici Way where she was the plant manager from 2006 to 2013. She contributed to community life in her music ministry, in her service on committees and in involvement in the daily and the special events of life. She was never one to pass up a card game or a social gathering.

In the midst of COVID-19 the sisters at Villa Angela and in the townhouses were able to gather in the kiva for a celebration of Claire's life. The space was filled with the melody of Joe Wise's "Bathe Her in Your Love", one of Claire's favourites, as sisters from Xavier Hall came in to say their final farewells. The service, which Claire planned, was led by Sheila. The themes of God the Potter and God's works of art were woven through the prayers. The reading from Jeremiah about the potter was proclaimed by Sr. Mary-Ellen and Sr. Eleanor read from the Ursuline Constitutions. Sr. Sheila's reflection focused on Claire's gifts of teaching, singing, and serving the community with generosity. She spoke of Claire's capacity to see everyone as a work of art and of her

own striving to be molded by the potter into a 'woman sent forth'.

For the second time, Blessed Sacrament Parish site hosted us for the Mass of Resurrection. We have become adept at the pandemic protocols and were grateful for the able assistance of the parish team members. Fr. Dikran was the celebrant and he was joined by Fr. Jim Higgins as concelebrant. Beautiful music was provided by Gaele Mifflin and Cindy Waddick. Many family members were able to join the sisters in celebrating Claire's life. Because only one person could use the microphone, Sr. Sheila, the lector, read the eulogy prepared by Claire's niece, Nicole Drew. In a touching tribute, Nicole spoke of the intertwining of Claire's blood family and Ursuline family. She spoke lovingly of Tante Claire with her non-judgmental advice, humour, kindness, fun-loving spirit and "unusual amount of knowledge about geothermal heating and boilers." Fr. Dikran, in his reflection on Claire's life stated that she never had a chance, named as she was after both Claire and Pierre. She was on the road to sainthood from the very beginning and she strove mightily throughout her days to be faithful and responsive to the Gospel call.

The pallbearers were Claire's nephews: Michel Giroux, Daniel Lacourcière, Marc St. Pierre, Stéphane St. Pierre, Pierre Beehler and Jeremy Drew. We gathered in a new section of St. Anthony's cemetery for the final prayers led by Sr. Theresa and Sr. Sheila presented the cross, the symbol of our ongoing connection with Sr. Claire's family, to Cecile Charron, Sr. Claire's sister. As a fitting close to the prayers, Nicole Drew on flute and Marc St. Pierre on guitar played "Morning Has Broken".



How many students, colleagues, sisters, employees, parish members and relatives have been influenced by Sister Claire's spirit, her humour, her dedication, her affirming presence, her enthusiasm for card games! She had a real gift for seeing others as God's works of art - and for supporting them in their journeys. From the very young to sisters on the threshold of heaven, her presence reminded those in her life how precious they are to God - and to her.

from Sr. Sheila's Reflection

