

Another empty chair in chapel...another empty place in the dining room...another empty bedroom in the health care wing...and I must say, I took a deep breath as I thought about all of this “emptiness” which we will feel as Sister Mary Edward takes her place within the glorious embrace of divinity.

Sister Mary Edward, Eddie, Aunt Betty, were all names that Mary Edward delighted in. On the evening of the first day of March, 2018, she heard the voice of God calling her name as she was welcomed to eternal happiness and peace.

During her last days she was surrounded by community and family members who simply by their presence, gave her a final appreciation of the love and respect the community and her family had for her. And although her words were few during that time, she was appreciative of our presence and support...and for that I thank the Sisters and her family members who were able to be with her at that time. At one point I said to her “Do what you have to do and thank you for all you have done for the community.” She loved the community!

In January during our winter visitation she told me that she was happy and content, she was grateful for the care given her by the community, she loved going to Life Pittsburgh, she was grateful that because of her hearing loss she no longer had to attend community meetings and that a sister was assigned to sit with her afterward and tell her everything that had transpired at the meeting. She also loved coming to community prayer and was so very faithful to this very important facet of what it means to be a Benedictine, although she added, she

wished she could sing more than she was able. Her chair in our chapel will be empty as she joins the heavenly choir in praise of God forever. A few days before she died, Sister Evelyn asked her, "If you could do anything in the whole world that you want to do, what would that be?" She answered, "I want to sing, I want to sing with the angels."

The scripture from the prophet Isaiah tells us of the freedom offered to us by God in a time of favor. Mary Edward has been released from all of her distress, her sight restored to enjoy the untold blessings of eternity, her ears opened to hear the voice of divinity, her energy once again her own as she gives up her walker and walks in the strength of her God.

How she must be rejoicing to be reunited with her dear parents and her twelve siblings. What a great Skovran reunion that must be. Her care and concern for her nieces and nephews was always evident and she prayed for all of you unceasingly. She will now pray for you eternally, of that you can be sure!

Mary Edward's love for the community was evident. Her grateful smile when someone was able to help her, although she tried her best to be independent. She enjoyed telling stories of her time on the various missions. She cared about each member of the community and was interested in each and every one of us. Her generosity to us went on year after year. How many of us have our Lenten copy of The Path to Peace ...

each Advent and Lent she would purchase these reflection books for each of us...again, her contribution to the prayer life of the community, a priority in her life.

Mary Edward had a certain discipline to her life. I could set my watch by what time she would come into the dining room for breakfast and take her place next to Sister Monica. At lunch she went to the same table...but took a different seat, where perhaps she could see the community assembled. At supper she chose another table but the same each evening, the table near the door, perhaps so she could get to the Rummikube table quickly each evening. She thoroughly enjoyed the game...and she could be fiercely competitive. She wanted to do everything well...and she wanted to win.

Often she would pass the office as she took her daily walks up and down our four wings. Rather recently she fell outside when she was walking. She was not at all thrilled when I asked her not to go outside unless she was with someone...so she continued those walks within the building. Yes, she was disciplined.

I retrieved Mary Edward's Lenten resolutions from the basket near the tabernacle. Her resolutions, known only to her, were simple expressions. She had the words "prayer" and "almsgiving" circled. With the word "silence" she noted "interior silence," "do not fret," God is with you!" And the word God was underlined and the sentence ended with an exclamation point. She was living her Lent.

If it is true that God loves a cheerful giver, her smile must have lit up heaven as she was welcomed there, her place now ready.

In her 90<sup>th</sup> year Mary Edward lived the Benedictine life fully, with devotion and integrity.

Now free from the burdens and disabilities which life presented to her, she is able to sing with the angels for all eternity, as God clasps her by the hand and says, "You are mine!"

Eternal rest and peace to you dear Mary Edward!

-Karen Brink, OSB

3/7/18