



Kathleen Mary O'Malley SL
September 30, 1930 – April 24, 2011

Kathleen O'Malley, born in Chicago, spent most of her childhood in Kansas City, Missouri. Kathleen graduated from Webster College in 1951, entered Loretto and was received on April 25, 1952.

Mary Ann Coyle remembers when she first met Kathleen. "Probably my first sight of Kath was when all of the "nubies" went together to the early mass in the chapel. Kath was a part of the college gang of our class. She, Margaret Grace, Gabriel Mary and Dorothy Mary were next to each other in seniority.

"I loved interacting with Kath during times we could officially talk and well as in some classes we had together – learning every thing we needed to know about classroom methods and while secretly laughing about ways we would teach even if the method wasn't on the list. I always remember how Kath would talk about Sister Felicia, her sociology teacher at Webster, and how influential Felicia was in Kath's life. Kath always had a welcome smile and a gracious way of

listening and being present even in the novitiate. Kath and I left the novitiate at the same time and arrived together at our first mission in Denver at St. Mary's Academy in August of 1954."

Kath taught in the Elementary School at St. Mary's Academy until 1957 when she went to Bishop Toolen High School in Mobile to teach English, social studies and was a part-time counselor.

Life changed for Kath in the fall of 1964 when Bishop Charles Buswell welcomed three SLs — Yolanda Veytia, Kathleen Vonderhaar, and Kath — to a new ministry of creating a pastoral team at Guadalupe Parish in Pueblo, Colorado.

Yolanda remembers "We came to begin a mission to explore working on a parish level primarily with adults. Kathleen O. was the appointed superior of the group and she used all her skills in public relations, excellent speaking and writing skills and sense of humor to introduce us into the diocese. The diocese, led by Bishop Buswell, was liturgically on the cutting edge of change; however, no preparations had been made for us in terms of a place to live, where to work and a pastor ready to accept us. With great diplomacy and tact, Kathleen was able to get the chancery office moving and we were given a home, a car and a parish in a couple of weeks. Kathleen befriended the Bishop, the clergy and many of the nuns in the city.

"Coming to Pueblo after being a high school teacher for years, she worked hard to adjust to the low-income, Hispanic population in our neighborhood who had little interest generally in book discussions, fine literature or gaining proficiency in English writing or speaking. Her compassion and real love of individuals helped her to reach out in new and different ways so that she was able to teach/counsel adults and teens effectively.

"Her sense of humor helped her to keep trying when she couldn't get the Jell-O to gel in her first attempts to cook. She laughed readily when she found out some middle school students from a rural village outside Pueblo asked what was wrong with that Sister who had all those spots on her face. A proud Irish gal blessed with many freckles, she realized that in that village freckles were almost non-existent.

"Above all, I remember how proud she was to be a Sister of Loretto and how the congregation led in renewal after Vatican II."

Kath returned to St. Mary's Academy for a year in 1968-69 and then went to St. Michael's High School in Santa Fe from 1969-74 as Director of Guidance.

Kath was an assistant on the Loretto Work Development Staff in Denver from 1974 - 81 and then was named coordinator of the Work Development Staff for a year. Because she loved the work, she decided to get a M.A. in Gerontology in 1982 and immediately was hired as Program Director at Cathedral Plaza and Marian Plaza, two retirement/assisted living high-rise apartments owned by Archdiocesan Housing which is affiliated with Catholic Charities in Denver.

After serving as interim president of St. Mary's Academy during the 1992-93 school year, Kath worked and volunteered at Catholic Charities until 2010 when she actually did retire.

From Gabriel Mason:

I have a picture of a smiling Kathleen O'Malley in 1947. I have a picture of a smiling Kathleen in 2007. In the sixty years between those dates, she experienced a life of laughing and love, tears and disappointments, close friends, enjoyable adventures and most of all service to others in her work and life.

From Sue Kenney:

Upon meeting Kathleen in Pueblo in 1964 my life changed and life in Loretto began. Over the years I continue to have high regard for her exuberance for life, her leadership and straight talk and attitude during suffering. A great legacy!

Great friend and caregiver Mary Catherine Rabbitt was at Kath's side when she died at home early on Easter Morning. God bless you, Kathleen!