

In Memory of Sr. Lucille Menard

~Excerpts from a Reflection written by Sr. Eilish Sweeney ~
February 20, 2012



"A couple of years ago, when Sr. Lucille was beginning to go through some difficult days, health wise, and not knowing what was ahead, I realized it was time to put some thoughts on paper in anticipation of an evening like tonight. Knowing Lucille for who she really was, I asked myself some though questions and now I share them with you as family, friends and members of our community.

"When will we ever learn ... that none of us ... no matter who we are ... knows what God has in store for us? Which one of us ... be it a friend like myself, a community member or a member of the Menard family ... which one of us would ever have believed that the woman before us this evening would have had to spend the past few years as she did?

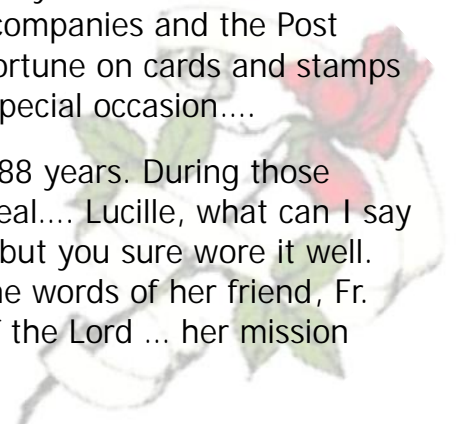
- aware, yet unaware of so much going on around her
- a part of, and yet not a part of so much that was going on
- what a lesson God is teaching us through Lucille.

"When we are young and alive and full of energy and enthusiasm or when we are older and still have the capacity to think and to choose – nothing is beyond us ... nothing is impossible for us. The Lucille before us this evening is reality. This could be you or it could be me. Only God knows what is ahead of us....

"Recently, there was an interview on the radio: it was in regards to an 80 year old woman who had just finished writing an account of her husband's illness with Alzheimer's. This woman stressed: that we, those of us who care for or are around persons with Alzheimer's, must always keep in mind that, regardless of changes in the person that the 'essence of the person is still there...'

"... As we were preparing for Christmas 2007, I offered to help out by keeping track of Lucille's Christmas cards as she received them ... One day, as we were going through the incoming mail, I said to her, "You got a lot of cards." Within a second, she turned to me and said, "I've got a lot of friends." For those of us who truly knew Lucille, I am willing to bet that when Lucille stopped writing – it was card companies and the Post Office that felt the effects the most. Lucille Menard spent a fortune on cards and stamps for family, friends and God knows who. She never missed a special occasion....

"Lucille, you have lived a long and fruitful life – almost 88 years. During those years, you have read volumes and you have written a great deal.... Lucille, what can I say about your style? You were criticized and you were admired, but you sure wore it well. Believe me, you will be remembered for it. I will close with the words of her friend, Fr. Terence Patterson ... 'May she now rest in the abiding arms of the Lord ... her mission completed.' Amen. Thank you."





*Excerpts from the “Homily at the funeral Mass”
for Sr. Lucille Menard – by Fr. Tom Orians, SA*

February 21, 2012

“Once again, we are forced to gather in celebration of the life of one of our Sisters of the Atonement. First it was Malachy, and soon it will be Francis Ignatius; but today it is **Lucille’s** extra-ordinary life in Christ that we must celebrate.

“These are sad days for those of us who have such fresh memories of a woman who inspired us, taught us, changed us, and loved us — and whom we deeply loved in return. Indeed, there is a hole in our hearts and a hole in the congregation today as we bid farewell to Lucille and all she has meant for us. As we gather today, this is the group that Lucille would have loved to be with, to tell more stories, to relive great days, to rattle a few cages, to simply share the moment, or to celebrate life as she so well could. She was challenging, she was loving, she was brilliant, she was humble, she was charitable, she was as some would say, more than direct in what she had to say. She was, as no other could be, “Lucille!”

“But for all that sense of loss we experience today, these are also days of genuine joy that she is at last home with God, set free from the limits of this world and now fully immersed in the love that filled her heart for 87 years. As we come together this morning around the Word of God that so imbued everything Lucille did, and the Eucharist that formed her sense of service and generosity in imitation of Jesus, we recall the gift from God that Lucille was — to Margee, to her nephews and nieces and family; to her Franciscan community; to her cherished friends and there are so many of them; to those she has served over the years; to the many, many people who came to know her and treasure her through the years....

“... I am keenly aware that I’m only one of many who could offer memories of Lucille and her profound effect on our lives — our sense of what’s important, our faith in God, our desire for goodness, our love of others. Lucille certainly was high on my list of SA greats. From the day I walked in the door, she nurtured me, instructed me as only she could and nudged me along over the years. One of my special moments was on my Ordination day in which Lucille vested me in the OLA vestment that I had borrowed from the convent. Little did she know the bishop had objected to her vesting me, but thanks to her wisdom driving me, I convinced him that it was ok for a woman to vest a priest. I later told her, and as only she could say, she remarked, ‘ ... a woman, much less a Sister, certainly could vest a priest at his Ordination; after all, if they were good enough to care for the sacristy laundry, then they certainly were good enough to place his vestments on him for the first time!’

“...Today Lucille is holy, perfect, and at peace in God’s holy presence. She is not simply in a better place. She is with Jesus, and at the Last Day, our Lord will raise up her and all the dead, and give eternal life to her and all believers in Christ.

“This is our hope. We grieve at her loss, but look forward to the day of Resurrection. We trust that the promises our Lord made at her Baptism are true. *‘I will never leave you nor forsake you,’* He says. That is true for Lucille; and it is true for us. So rest well, Sister Lucille. Rest well until we meet again in the arms of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As we continue to celebrate Lucille’s passing from this life to fullness of life with God, we can all say, ‘Welcome home, Lucille, to Eternal company with God, the source and fulfillment of your amazing, blessed life.’ Thank you for your love & your life. Eternal rest grant unto her O, Lord & let perpetual light shine upon her.”