



In Memory of Sr. Rita McAuley, SA

~ Excerpts from a Reflection written by
Sisters Dolores Fenzel, M. Eilish Sweeney & Eileen Waldron ~
Evening Prayer Service - JUNE 26, 2012 - Tuesday

Birth: May 16, 1930 ✠ **Death:** June 16, 2012
Entered our Congregation: March 25, 1952 in Ireland
First Profession: October 17, 1953 ✠ **Final Vows:** August 29, 1959

“Sr. Rita (Margaret Teresa) McAuley, was one of five children born to Philip and Lucy McAuley in Cartons, Moate, County Westmeath, Ireland on May 16, 1930 ... Several years ago, an article was written about Sr. Rita, and those who worked with her at that time described her in the following manner:
‘She’s so basic and down to earth. She’s caring and has a great sense of humor.’
‘She’s a gentle person, a generous listener and has a remarkable and keen sense of humor.’

“Sr. Rita did, indeed, have a keen sense of humor. What’s more, she was self-effacing and saw nothing unusual in the life choice she made. She said, *‘Many young girls considered the religious life in those days. You made choices and that was one of the choices you had ... one of the possibilities. I never considered it unusual for a moment. I knew it was a good thing to do and I wanted to do something good and worthwhile with my life. I wanted to help people. I saw the Sisters doing that and I knew that that was what I wanted to do.’*

“Sister Rita summed up her missionary life simply saying, *‘After formation, I spent 40 years in pastoral ministry, mostly teaching religious education sacramental preparation programs. I loved teaching the children and visiting their homes and parents.’*

“Sr. Rita was a gem to live with. In her compassionate way, she became a gift to me as I began to acclimate myself to being a missionary to the Mexican people. Yes, it would have been great to be steeped in the language, but we managed to form strong bonds with the Spanish-speaking people and we were open to learn and they were open to teach us. Sr. Rita was the kind of Sister that saw when the other Sister was in need of recreation. Whenever I needed to drive to Morro Bay, to walk the beach, there she was—eager and anxious to go along—and it was only years later that, much to my surprise, I learned that she went with me for my sake and not hers. God bless Rita, who made community life warm and gentle in so many ways. I wish I had taken time to express my love and gratitude to this Sister of mine more often.

“In 1981, Sr. Rita joined our Sisters in Brooklyn, New York, where together they served the people of St. Jerome’s Parish. To this day, Sr. Rita is still remembered by these grateful families whom she loved and served.... Rita’s nine years of ministry among the people of St. Jerome’s came to an end when she returned to Graymoor in 1990. At that time, Sr. Rita became part of the “Hands of Love” Program. This was a great ministry of phoning and visiting the homebound in the area. In her own words, *‘I started visiting the homebound and those in nursing homes ... there were so many people who didn’t have family and friends around them ... that was when I started a telephone ministry. Along with visiting the homebound, I had a list of people to call, and check on, every week.’*

“A lot can be said about Sr. Rita McAuley and her years of ministry, but most of all, she was a good friend and she was missed when she could no longer continue in this ministry. Rita, you are enjoying your heavenly home and receiving your heavenly reward from Our Lord at this very minute. May you rest in peace.”