

Reflection

Sr. Peggy Duggan, OP

"Nursing brings the healing ministry of the Church to the LOST, the LAST, and the LEAST."

My relationship with Sr. Peggy began the day she entered the convent. She and Catherine Bowser were classmates at St. Elizabeth Hospital, Brighton, Massachusetts. Cathy had an aunt who was a Dominican sister, Sr. M. Jerome Collins. Sr. Jerome was Peggy's introduction to Dominicans.

On the day Peggy and Cathy entered I met them at the Louisville Airport. As we entered the St. Catharine driveway, Peggy asked me to stop the car. She and Cathy ceremoniously took their packages of cigarettes and tossed them out the window.

I was a Council member at the time and because I was a nurse these two professional registered nurses were assigned to me for special monitoring. Cathy decided to return home but Peggy stayed and was professed August 15, 1962.

Peggy was extremely talented and extremely complicated. She really wanted to be a doctor because healing the LOST, the LAST and the LEAST was as much a part of her as breathing.

THE LOST An example of one of the LOST: A homeless man approached her for some food. She told him to mow her grass while she made a sandwich for him. From then on she kept him supplied with bread, peanut butter and jelly. It was not a Lady Bountiful gift. He maintained his dignity by mowing the grass, getting rid of the trash or some other chore like that. He was no longer lost, he had a faithful friend in Peggy.

THE LAST An example of the LAST: As a postulant Peggy worked in the St. Catharine Infirmary. Then in her early missions in our hospitals she worked and lived with aging sisters. She was a member of a Congregational Committee to face the decline in age and number of vocations among the sisters. She was like a voice in the wilderness calling the Community to prepare the sisters for their own aging. She wrote a strong petition for sisters to age in place. She advocated exercise, maintaining a moderate weight, and living not just drifting every day of life. She believed the Last should be the best.

THE LEAST Example of the LEAST: As a nurse midwife Peggy's strongest purpose in life was to help a woman deliver a healthy baby. She abhorred abortion. Sometimes a mother would bring her daughter to the Clinic for an abortion. Peggy would say, "I will not be with you for abortion but I am to prepare you. Let's listen to the baby's heartbeat." When the patient listened to the heartbeat most of the time the abortion was canceled. Peggy often said, "I wish those who advocate abortion watched one with pieces of a living human being delivered piece by piece." Peggy considered each birth a miracle - a gift from God.

This is just a snippet of the good Sr. Peggy did. Whatever her flaws, her goodness, compassion and nursing ministry outweighed them all.

Written by: Sr. Paschala Noonan

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