

Sister Mary Eileen Peach, SHF

October 10, 1921 - March 18, 2010

Entered the Sisters of the Holy Family July 2, 1942

Final Profession of Vows January 1, 1947

I wasn't in the near vicinity of Sister Eileen for most of her lifetime, but during the past three and a half years while I've been working in the Care Center, I've seen what made her eyes light up and her smile reach almost from ear to ear. I've learned why they called her "Smiley Eily"!

Her eyes would light up when her sister, Dorothy, and family came to visit her: "Look who's here!" she would say, and she would be full of smiles.

Dorothy would remind her of trips they had gone on, and in going through family albums and pictures of faraway places, they would relive memories of birthday parties and jubilee celebrations and trips to Russia, Ireland, New England in the autumn, and more. And Dorothy would bring presents; Sister Eileen loved presents! Dorothy brought books and snacks and candy, and kept Sister Eileen supplied with some of her favorite things!

Any mention of San Francisco would delight her. She would tell about her experiences there -- the Fromm Institute in San Francisco, adventures with her brother, Walter, and Sister Kathryn, Holy Family Day Home where she served for many years in the library, reading and telling stories to the children.

She loved music. Even when she was no longer able to participate fully in the liturgy, she would sometimes turn to me after a song at Mass and say, "That was beautiful!" We'd sing songs together, and we would make up the words if we didn't know the right ones -- and we'd laugh!

She loved animals. Noelani the dog and Velcro the kitten would make her eyes light up for sure! Stella, the bunnies, the birds who came to the feeder on the balcony all made her laugh with delight. Her army of stuffed animals were stand-ins when there were no live critters to hold.

She loved children and parties and prizes and bingo; she loved watching the Golden Girls on television - "Isn't she awful?" she would say -- with a wicked grin -- when Sophia made one of her remarks about one of her housemates. She loved food, particularly sweets, particularly chocolate.

In the last few months before I left for Massachusetts, Sister Eileen spent more time crying. We never knew what would trigger her tears, and often she could not tell us; she'd say she wasn't sad, but she couldn't stop crying. And then she liked someone to be with her, even if we didn't say or do anything. Holding a hand, placing an arm around her shoulders, just being there were enough.

Photos of Sister Eileen from her ministry days and from her birthday and jubilee parties show "Smiley Eily" enjoying fun times with the day home children, her family and friends. She had plenty of smiles and laughter after coming to the Motherhouse, but it wasn't all happiness and joy -- some of her tears were probably coming from an awareness of how much she had lost as her memory and vocabulary began failing her. I loved her joy and laughter; I respected her tears and didn't try to talk her out of them. I hope now she is in a place where there are no tears on all God's holy mountain.

-- *Sister Carol J. Crater, SHF*

September 2010 for Fall *Family Friends*