

Words of Remembrance  
Heather Mary Parmeter

It is with deep sadness that we farewell our dear sister, Heather Mary, and offer to her much loved brothers and sister, Darryl, Ron and Iris, and all their families, our sincerest sympathy. Heather lived a long and full life and died aged 93, last Monday night, with her family members, Iris and Anne Marie and Sister Ann Daley with her. She was the second child of Francis Parmeter and Ivy (née Casey). Norman and Hazel (our Sister Joseph Mary) have gone before her. Iris told me that the name Heather was given on entering the convent in 1934, Sister Mary Martha, fitted her well, as she was always active, kindly attentive to others and often found in the kitchen; in her later years she was still industrious – if you found her sitting in a bus or a train (not at all unusual) her fingers were busy with her tatting.

Heather has been described as colourful, vibrant, like a comet that leaves a shining trail, childlike, gifted, grateful and always uniquely herself. All of this is captured in the first Scripture reading; she was free with the special freedom of a child of God. She dared to follow her dream – and something we loved her for, she didn't let the system get her down or curtail her self expression. She was always bright, her dark eyes shining as she recognised you and always experimenting. I remember standing in the chemist's at Merewether Beach waiting for a prescription and idly looking down at the counter where I saw a brochure on exercises for your heart called Heart Moves and there in the photo of the front row of the class was Heather Mary, sporting a very nice T-shirt.

Heather had many gifts which she developed well. She was for many years an infants' teacher who shepherded the little ones; she loved them, never driving them. A pupil of hers who became a mature-age trainee teacher related that when the lecturer was

talking about the attitude a teacher should have to the children, he called out, “like Sister Martha.” Once a State School inspector commented to her that her Grade Two were reading better than many Grade Four children and asked her how that came about. She replied typically, “That’s for you to find out!”

She loved music and used her gift of piano playing for young and old. She was especially proud of Ron when he came to St Joseph’s Home to entertain them all. Heather was a most creative person who produced superb tapestry, tatting and embroidery, which won her first prizes in the shows. Her magnificent orchids were also worthy of prizes.

To say Heather was energetic is really an understatement. Angela tells me that when she was leaving the convent at 6.00am to go for her walk, surely a reasonable time, she would meet Heather coming back from hers; later in the day she would be off to indoor bowls or Thai Chi. It wasn’t unusual to come down stairs in the morning at Cardiff to find the odour of a fruit cake which was well on the way to being cooked.

Ever ready to learn and to accept a challenge Heather attended the Mater Dei Course at St Patrick’s College Manly in 1975, venturing courageously into the rarified atmosphere of this male-dominated institution.

Heather, of course, was forthright rather like the woman in today’s Gospel. You were never left wondering what she meant. This made her easy to relate to. She expressed her opinions strongly, was dedicated to the needy and was persistent. I know this faithful, prayerful and gifted woman has already heard the words of Jesus, “Woman, great is your faith”. Now, dear Heather, may you enjoy eternal rest from your labours.