

Words of Remembrance of Lynette

Rosie will speak to you on behalf of Lynette's family. I will share something of what her life and ministry, as a Sister of St Joseph, have meant to us Sisters and to so many people in our diocesan community and beyond.

The symbols of baptism highlighted as we began this liturgy were special to Lynette because her baptismal commitment to the person and mission of Jesus was front and centre of her life.

In fact each year in community Lynnie had us celebrate the anniversary of her baptism rather than her birthday. As we were celebrating just a month ago today, the 84th anniversary of her baptism, she recalled that her parents, Evelyn and Allan, made the long journey from Gongolgon in the far North West to Tamworth in order to obtain adequate medical care for the birth of their fourth child (having lost their third).

Before returning home Lynette Maureen was baptised in the parish church in Tamworth, and in the absence of any other relatives, she told us, a senior student from the local school was her sponsor: Mary Brady, who later became a Dominican Sister and well-known artist.

Lynette's dad was a country policeman and the family moved a number of times before settling at Edgeworth, when the highly-principled Allan Pearce became Superintendent of Police in Newcastle.

In her final year of primary schooling at St Joseph's Cardiff, Lynette achieved the highest marks in the diocese in an exam that all Catholic sixth graders did in those days, and she was awarded the Bishop's Bursary that enabled her to board here at Lochinvar.

Lynnie and I started High School here as boarders on the same day in 1952, and that was the beginning of a friendship that has endured and deepened over 70 years.

To be honest, I am struggling to imagine what life will be like without her companionship and the unfailing support and encouragement she has always given me.

I suspect that is a sentiment shared, not only by the members of her much loved family, but also by everyone in her wide circle of friends and associates, many of whom are here today – former classmates and pupils, teaching colleagues and parishioners, spiritual directors and directees, and participants in her Faith Formation courses and faith sharing groups. So many have written to us in the past week of Lynnie's goodness and kindness, her loving care and support, her joy in living and sharing.

On 1 January 1957, less than a month after we left school, Lynnie entered the novitiate here and was given the name Sr M Richard of the Holy Name of Jesus.

I think she felt keenly the break from family that religious life involved in those days, but we always knew that she loved, deeply, each and every one of her nine siblings and each and every one of their children and grandchildren. She would speak of you often, and would have us all praying for you, in your joys and sorrows, achievements and anxieties.

Lynnie was professed here in this chapel on 4 August 1959, and for the next two decades taught in our secondary schools: first at Belmont, then as a founding staff member at St Mary's Gateshead, and at Taree for much of the 1970s. Of that time she once said, 'I owe a significant part of my growth into responsible adulthood to the lay staff and students of the schools. I remember them with love.'

In 1981 Lynnie came back to Lochinvar, where, for some 10 years, she held what she called 'the privileged position' of caring for teenaged boarders.

She saw as one advantage of that role that there was space during the day to be contemplative ... 'That's when I began to understand', she said, 'that the charism of our congregation was to be contemplative in the midst of our ministry... to recognise the presence of God in the everyday world.'

When our boarding school closed, Linnie pursued studies in Theology, Scripture and Christian Spirituality, which led to the ministries of parish pastoral associate, Adult Faith Formation in our Tenison Woods Education Centre (TWEC) and Spiritual Direction.

A couple of years ago Tracey Edstein interviewed Linnie for an article in the *Madonna* magazine, which was aptly titled 'Dancing with the Creator'.

She loved the image of dancing and spoke often of the Blessed Trinity in terms of God being the Dance, Jesus the Dancer and the Holy Spirit the Dancing in us. For her it was an image of loving relationships, inclusiveness, community, freedom.

As so many of you know, the Trinity and the Person of Jesus were central to the spirituality Linnie shared - in the TWEC Courses, Cursillo, RCIA, Spiritual Direction, retreats and faith-sharing groups of all kinds.

She was also very committed to ensuring those ministries continued and that others had the necessary training, whether it be to present a TWEC course, conduct a retreat, or provide spiritual direction.

For example, in recent years she has been central to the establishment of a 4 year course for training Spiritual Directors (one of her many ecumenical ventures). It was perhaps more than coincidence that, when Linnie was very peacefully nearing the end of her life's journey a few days ago, that group was at the Adamstown Uniting Church having a last session before their Graduation Ceremony the next day.

Linnie's health problems began decades ago when she had the first of two major heart surgeries. So, it often used to worry us, when **we** thought she was not well, that she would set out for a day, an evening or a weekend, to meet up with some group, or some individual in need, often getting home late at night.

Her priority always was to respond to the people who needed her support and care, whoever they were, wherever they were, and she used to embrace each person she encountered - *literally*. I will tell you a story about that later in the hall.

In her more relaxed times Linnie used to sit on the deck outside her room, enjoying the beauties of nature ... and reading!

To say that she was an avid reader would be an understatement. She devoured books at a great rate, and had an extraordinary ability to remember - and quote - what she'd read, especially poetry, and *especially* Rumi, the 13th century Islamic poet, scholar and mystic, quoted on the front of your booklet. One of the Sisters said the other day, 'Well, Linnie has at last met Jesus – and Rumi – face-to-face'.

The article I mentioned earlier finished with these words:

When asked what she looks forward to, [Linnie] cites Teresa of Avila:

'God and the soul have fruition of each other in the deepest silence'

... that's what I look forward to –

as well as time with Jesus that's not bookended by jobs.'

May you rest now in peace, Linnie, with Jesus whom you loved so deeply and served so generously.

Patricia Egan

Words of Remembrance for my beautiful Aunty Lynn

Rosemarie Rohr

It is an honour and deep privilege to share these Words of Remembrance with you, on behalf of Lynn's family.

Lynn was the fourth of twelve children, and of her surviving nine siblings, six of them along with their beloveds (Lynn's name for our husbands, wives or partners), managed to produce 24 nieces and nephews (me being one of them). The family grew and that number included our beloved's, an additional 24, producing a staggering 56 grand nieces and nephews. To save you undertaking the maths, that is a grand total of 123 family members. Please accept our apologies if you are currently standing or outside.

Lynn has been a main and magnificent thread that has weaved its way through our family tapestry. She has enriched all of our lives with unconditional LOVE, prayers, affirmation, gratitude, guidance, kindness, generosity, support, re-assurance, and her unbelievable non-judgemental nature.

Lynn has been a constant in our lives, being there with us and for us, in celebrating the milestones. Supporting and praying for us in our most challenging ordeals. And she has been there for us in day to day living, celebrating God in the ordinary.

Lynn has always been that calming effect, she was like a soothing balm on irritated irksome skin, she had the ability to soothe your spirit somehow magically.

Everyone here would have experienced the Lynn effect..... she had a gift, a way of making anyone feel special, a short conversation with Lynn had the ability to remove a burdensome weight from your shoulders, had the ability to put a skip in your step, could bring tears of joy to your eyes, and a conversation always assisted in seeing the beauty or God in all that surrounded you.

Lynn amazingly remembered every family member birthday, yes, the 123 of them. Lynn prepared and sent cards and gifts annually to family members, the birthday cards were always something else, they were full of wisdom and pieces of her favourite poetry, pieces that had real sentiment and that tugged at the heart strings. You had to be mindful of when and where you read them, as they were full of love and wisdom – and were more often than not tear jerkers!

Lynn's love for family was exponential, despite Lynn taking religious vows it did not limit her ability to parent. Our family members are all well aware of Lynn's love and support despite locality. The Kauter nieces and nephews, not to mention mum and dad were blessed that Lynn was positioned at Lochinvar for so long. Lynn has been a co-parent for us 10 Kauter children, for almost 50 years.

As I progressed through to school, Lynn's nurturing continued and I was blessed to interact with Lynn almost daily, before and after school when she was boarding mistress for my school friends. I always loved to read her messages laminated and stuck on the mirrors in the boarder's bathroom, they read something along the lines, 'You are beautiful, shine your light for all to see, God loves you'.

Also at this time, Lynn's nurturing was spread not only to her boarding students, but to my younger brothers and sisters whom she looked after one day a week to give mum the opportunity to do something for herself.

I will be ever grateful for Lynn's expertise in all things God, Jesus and Trinity, she has grounded me in LOVE and in JOY-OUS WELL – BE-ING.

Lynn reassured: That at the heart of everything is God's Love! That GOD is always FOR us, no matter the life situation!

Lynn lived with gratitude right up to her very last word, her very last breathe. The last words Lynn uttered were THANK YOU.

I will finish with a RUMI quote, it is really fitting, seems Lynn lost sight in her right eye some years ago, and moved to use her third or spiritual eye permanently!

'Goodbyes are only for those who love with their eyes. Because for those who love with heart and soul there is no such thing as separation'.