

*Eulogy given by Sister
Pat Guziec*



What can be said to honor a religious woman who was a survivor, an administrator, an innovator, a caregiver, an amazing aunt and sister-in-law, and a faithful Sister of Mercy? There is much that can be said about this small woman who always had big goals and set out to accomplish them.

Life began for this valiant woman, Sister Corita (Mary Elizabeth Holmes) on March 2, 1920, in Enid, Okla. She had five brothers and one sister who are all deceased. She is survived by many loving relatives and friends. In recent weeks, when Sister Monica or I would comment on her very devoted sister-in-laws and nephews and nieces, she would say, "Oh, I know they are all wonderful!" We're sure that Sister Corita felt the love of her family through her nephew, Greg, who was with her during the last week at Mercy Villa.

Sister Corita liked to celebrate. She entered the novitiate at Mt. Loretto in Council Bluffs on Sept. 8, 1938, (the Blessed Mother's birthday). Corita had a great devotion to Jesus under His title Sacred Heart. That is why she took the name Corita when she was professed – Cor Jesu – meaning "the heart of Jesus." Her feast day is on the June 19, the feast of the Sacred Heart. It is fitting that she went home to Heaven on the feast of Pentecost. During this last year with us at Mercy Villa, I'm certain she never missed a party or a celebration – and there were many of them.

Sister Corita also loved to travel. She made trips to Ireland where our foundress, Catherine McAuley, began the order of Mercy. She cruised to the Caribbean and to Alaska. She also traveled to Rome.

Sister Corita earned a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in administration and counseling. I experienced Sister Corita's expertise firsthand. My second teaching assignment was with third and fourth graders at St. Peter's grade school in Joplin. My added assignment was to learn the skills of being a principal from Sister Corita. She was an excellent teacher.



We remember Sister Mary Corita Holmes 1920-2009

~ a Sister of Mercy for 71 years!

After teaching and being a principal for 41 years, Sister Corita took courses and became certified as a hospital chaplain. Thus began her journey of bringing compassion and love to countless patients for the next 26 years. As one of her colleagues said, "She put her heart and soul into her healing ministry." She was on duty practically every day, but on Fridays Sister Corita would come in earlier than usual so she could visit patients who were to undergo surgery that day.

She once said, "To be a part of a person's life at a time when he or she is most vulnerable is inspiring. I've gained so much more from the experience than I've given."

Through the years, Sister Corita regarded her own health problems as challenges and never let them slow her down. She was involved in her family's business ventures. Together they created the Mercy Village Healing Garden, naming it in honor of Corita's mother, Clara. She is the namesake of the St. John's Sister Mary Corita Holmes Breast Center and a founding member of St. John's Regional Foundation. She also served on many boards through the years.

Friends and family members have used words like: compassionate, faithful, steadfast and committed, to describe Sister Corita. I think we need to add: determined, fun-loving, loyal, hard-working, and holy.

If asked about her accomplishments, though, Sister Corita would say she can't be bothered with words and phrases like these. She'd simply say, "I have work to do."

There's no doubt that Sister Corita's strong Mercy Spirit will live on in the hearts of those who loved her and felt that spirit.