

March 26, 2002

The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

Dear Sisters,

This evening, shortly before 6:00 p.m., the Good Shepherd gathered into His arms our dear Sister Carolyn who spent her life at the service of the Gospel, shepherding many close to His Heart.



Sister Carolyn Ackerman
Born: September 27, 1942 in Monroe, Michigan
Professed: June 30, 1962
Departed from MSC: June 12, 1968
Returned to MSC: January 23, 1992
Final Profession: October 28, 1995
Died: March 26, 2002 in Reading, PA

Sister Carolyn began her journey with our MSC community in 1956 when she was received as an aspirant. It was a small ad in a Catholic publication which drew her to our congregation. After profession, Sister taught in the parish schools of Coplay and Coaldale, PA. Rather than professing final vows, Sister decided to return to her family in Michigan. There she continued the ministry of teaching and completed her college studies.

Later, Sister Carolyn earned a Masters in Education and became a principal. After completing her Masters in Divinity, she worked as a pastoral associate. In the course of these years, Carolyn joined the Sisters of Christian Community, a loosely structured group who profess private vows under the local Bishop.

After caring for her father until his death, Carolyn made inquiries regarding the possibility of re-entrance. During the period of initial incorporation and for years later, she served as pastoral associate at St. Francis de Sales parish in Reading. From 1997 until 1999 she served in this capacity in Parkersburg, WV. In August of 1999, Sister Carolyn was elected to the Provincial Council and began ministry at St. James in Charles Town, WV which is about a three-hour drive from Reading.

→

Sister's pastoral skills and dedication were outstanding. Her pastor in Charles Town told me that in the last few years, she brought 87 converts into the Church and led 132 persons back to the practice of their faith. She was very much loved in every parish in which she served. In the days since she was brought to St. Michael's, Sister Carolyn had a stream of visitors from near and far, each testifying to the deep impact she made on their lives.

Carolyn was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in late December of 2000. She underwent major surgery in January which was followed by chemotherapy. Throughout these long months, the parishioners of St. James were her faithful friends: nurses, drivers and providers of food, friendship, and companionship. As far as possible she continued her ministry in the parish.

This past November she was told by the specialist who had cared for her that he was almost certain that all was well. The following months were filled with more activity and high spirits. Fortunately Sister was able to spend a wonderful time with her family toward the end of the year.

In February, Sister Carolyn was diagnosed with kidney stones. This caused severe pain which became more and more difficult to control. On March 15, we learned that she never had a kidney stone but rather a blocked kidney caused by cancerous cells. Sister was transported from the hospital in Virginia to our Health Care Unit by the same three faithful parishioners who had cared so lovingly for her by taking her for chemo treatments and emergency room visits, plus so much more, these past 15 months. The pastor and parishioners of St. James have been outstanding in their dedication to and appreciation of Sister Carolyn.

Carolyn was a committed Christian and a faithful follower of the Gospel throughout her life. We are grateful to Sister for her devotion and love of the MSC Community. As a member of the Provincial Council, Carolyn, despite her illness, was always ready to serve in any way she could and made every effort to participate in meetings and province events. She lived our charism fully and had a deep spirit of gratitude for all the love which she received from others.

During the last six days of her life, Carolyn's sister and family members were at her side day and night. She died surrounded by those she loved and accompanied by their prayer. The focal point of Sister Carolyn's energy and devotion as a pastoral associate centered on the yearly celebration of the Triduum. This year she will celebrate it in the Heavenly Jerusalem surrounded by many whom she accompanied on their last journey.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Sister Carolyn on Wednesday, March 27, 2002, at 7:00 p.m. She will then be laid to rest in our convent cemetery at 10:00 a.m. on Holy Thursday.

United in Jesus who laid down His life that we may live,

Sister Marie Clark, MSC.