

A Remembrance of Sister Peg Dolan, R.S.H.M.
October 17, 2009, Sacred Heart Chapel
Robert W. Scholla, S.J.

This past week, Father Lawton addressed our university community and, borrowing an image from Harvard University Professor, Elaine Scarry, Father Lawton likened a university to a group of persons who come together in hope that they might “increase the chance that one [of them] would be looking in the right direction when a comet makes its sweep through a certain patch of sky.”

Today, the community of Loyola Marymount University comes together to testify to our collective experience of a most glorious comet that has swept through our patch of sky!

Each of us here has experienced the brilliant light and strong love of Sister Peg Dolan who dispelled whatever darkness that invaded our lives, and—whose gentle presence and warm smile, renewed our confidence in God’s great love for us!

Sister Peg was aflame with love for God and for God’s dear people—for all of you!

Each of us here—in times of personal crisis or familial loss, experienced the concern and comfort of Peg! It is said that “a friend is one who comes in when the whole world has gone out.” Well, Sister Peg entered each of our lives, and she blessed us with a most precious gift: friendship. And, in becoming a friend of Peg’s, we experienced ourselves drawn into friendship with our good and loving God!

Sister Peg’s love—for faculty, staff, students, alums, —and for all of our families, was untiring! As a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Peg embodied the vision and passion of Father Gailhac! Jean Gailhac tells us that “Love doesn’t know how to stop.” Well, for those of us who knew Sister Peg, I am sure that we would all agree: You couldn’t even slow Peg down, —let alone stop her!”

Father Gailhac describes the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary as a community whose apostolic aim “is to make God known and loved, rooting God deeply in the people who are entrusted” to them. Through her life and ministry, Sister Peg made God known; and—through her love and joy, she not only mirrored God’s love for us, she revealed God’s genuine delight *in* us! Peg lived her religious life joyfully and fully; and in doing so, she taught us the purpose of every Christian’s vocation: “. . . to become like Jesus in everything, living His life and being one with Him” (Father Gailhac).

With the wisdom of an Irish woman, Peg lovingly recalled our university to its real goal: To form women and men who possess “*compassionate* minds and *intelligent* hearts.”

In her Commencement Address in 2008, Peg asked our graduates: “Are you more alive for having been at LMU?” Well, today, each of us here can certainly respond that we are much more alive for having been touched by Sister Peg Dolan’s heart! John’s gospel records Jesus’ mission for us: *ut vitam habeant*, that they may have life. Peg’s ministry was a source of God’s life, and her own life proclaimed: “Live your life—live God’s *life*—to the full!”

“Dream big,” Peg would say to our students, “big enough to fulfill God’s dream for you!” Just as Sister Peg challenged our students, so too she invites us today: “Dream big” and “make each day a masterpiece!”

Today our university community gathers in sorrow, but, with Easter confidence, we joyfully proclaim that we have witnessed a most glorious comet! We give God great thanks for Sister Peg Dolan whose life was truly a masterpiece of God! And, as our God did for Sister Peg, may God—whose very being is love, reign in each of our hearts and set them afire with zeal for our own holiness and for the holiness of all who are entrusted to our care!

Thank you, Peg! And please, pray for us!