

**Sister Peg Dolan**  
**Thomas P. Rausch, S.J.**

In one of the readings we've just heard, Father Guihac counseled his sisters, "Do good, so that all who see you see that this is a habit of your heart . . . for those who see you read your heart." This was certainly one of the outstanding habits of Sister Peg's heart!

I first met Peg shortly after I arrived here in 1976; I was living in Rosecrans Hall and she was coordinator of the dorm counselors for campus ministry. I was walking over to the Jesuit Residence, when suddenly this car screeched to a halt in front of Desmond, and this woman rushed out and called, are you Tom Rausch? I'm Sister Peg Dolan. Welcome! I knew right away I had a friend.

And so did so many others that she met during her 35 years here, 33 of them in our residence halls. Everyone loved Sister Peg, the students especially whom she laughed with, cried with, prayed with, and counseled over those years. She saw the uniqueness of each person.

Peg could embrace you with her smile, full of warmth; you knew you were important to her. She had a thousand ways of showing her love, making her coffee or cheese cakes for those on retreat, sending cards for birthdays or anniversaries, finding a baby sitter or a child to bring into your home, sharing her deep wisdom, remembering you in prayer. She made you feel special. I always felt better after running into her.

We knew her by many names. Sister Margaret Mary, M<sup>2</sup>, Sister Dolan, Mother Honora, Peggy to her family, or simply Sister Peg.

She was much more than a supportive friend. She was also a wise woman, a wisdom teacher. She understood prayer and the spiritual life. "Seek not the consolations of God, but the God of consolations," she used to say. She loved the words of the prophet Micah which so well described her own life: "You have been told what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6 8).

I don't think anyone knew the Spiritual Exercises better than Peg; she was an excellent director. I suspect that she heard more confessions than any of the Jesuits, and though she couldn't grant absolution, I know the grace of the sacrament was often there.

As her good friend Sr. Joanne Connolly said, Peg said yes to God, yes to life, yes to the uniqueness of each person. She was full of life, and though she had placed herself in God's loving hands and was certainly ready to meet her God, she was reluctant to give up life before her time. We watched her in these last years, diminished in body but never in spirit. She was unbowed.

After she moved down to the infirmary at Orange where she was so well cared for, we thought she was near the end. I sent her a card, trying to say those things I wanted to say. I thought it was a farewell. But when I went down for Sr. Agnes Marie's 80<sup>th</sup> jubilee just over a month ago,

there was Peg helping to entertain the guests. When she thanked me for my card, saying it was special, I was embarrassed and said, Peg, you're like a cat with nine lives! And she just laughed. To the very end she maintained her independence.

One of the profound principles of our Catholic tradition is the recognition that grace builds on nature; *gratia perficit naturam*. That is to say, when we open ourselves to grace, when we allow the Spirit to transform us, when we live in communion with Jesus, our humanity is ennobled, perfected, can become itself sacramental, a living sign of God's gracious presence. That was certainly true of Peg.

She was a woman of profound faith, who remained always rooted in Christ Jesus like the branches rooted in the vine that Jesus himself spoke of at his last supper with his own.

He said, "If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you."

In the reading from Fr. Jean Gaijac he encouraged his sisters, the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, "to be, heart and soul, living images of Jesus Christ." That was Peg. Her very smile was radiant, lit from within, with the love of God. She was a living icon of that love.

And now she's entered into the glory of the Lord.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her sisters, the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, and all the religious women on campus, who loved Peg as one of their own, as she loved them.

Father Lawton said it best in his letter to the LMU community, "She will always be part of our life and a huge part of our legacy. We have been fortunate to know a saint."

Good by Peg. Walk with our God and remember you many friends.