



***Sr. Beverly Rochford
was called to new life
on December 14, 2017
in her 61st year of religious life.***



**Sr. Betty Matuszek gave the flowing reflection
at the Liturgy of Christian Burial:**

Beverly, so vibrant a presence in her 60+ years as our Sister, has gone to God. And we have all become aware of how deeply she valued being -- our Sister, our friend. And through her, how much we mean to one another.

Beverly's physical stamina as Sr. Martin Patrick was clearly established in the Cathedral High School gym, teaching phys ed in full habit, only slightly modified. Her energy was boundless until illness. We have learned that that stamina was to become a zeal applied in many avenues and endeavors.

What endeavor stands out the most? Probably her role as CEO of the Mont Marie Craft Festival. She negotiated her stipend to allow for year-round planning for the weekend of organizing and sales, which is still a legend in these parts. Her dozens of committees will testify that neither torrential rains nor high hilltop winds affected their scheduled assignments. Bev's customer service was weatherproof. Several years after the Festival ceased to be, I approached a local public figure about our renewing fundraising. She said, "Yes -- now, you're the Order with that big Craft Festival, right?" So, while it wasn't specifically our evangelical charism, Bev truly made The Festival an icon of our hospitality.

With that, we remember her exercise class programs. And her business management of Barbara Gumprecht's remarkable chocolate shop. And her role as a travel organizer, local and international.

Those are significant "things." And then Bev, the person

She bridged the sadness of her parents' early separation with a deep and mutual father-daughter devotion. That was visible in their daily after school from St. Thomas'-to-home rides. And in Bev's long-term adult care for her mother's medical and housing needs.

She was an explorer of new venues, a pioneer in one of our first intentional neighborhood communities – 80 Magnolia Terrace, Springfield. There we learned her insistence that things be done right --- as she saw right. She insisted that we place furnishings at precisely the safest angles, and be all mindful of haste and waste. But when she took leave from her own principles, and fell off a ladder by reaching too high and alone, and landed in an ambulance bruised and red-faced, that became her confession of "do as I say, not as I do." There was her humor.

There was her focus, her driven focus, on raising money for us, ergo the Festival.

There was her reverence for good health, in her exploration of what was good for you, what was not. And then, in illness, her choice of alternative healing. Her grasp of the mystical elements of wholeness directed her choices in treatment and care. That, and the friendships she formed in The Cancer Connection, may well have sustained her long beyond prognosis. But in that choice was an emotional price. It was her yearning for familiar company very nearby. Her humble requests for visitors, remembered or not, helped us to newly appreciate each other. It resonated, and brought to her side a regular cadre of friends, new and old. And probably every SSJ visitor got asked – how's Roberta? There was her care for the elders, the sick and the dying. Did we all know that Bev entertained on piano? And loved being called to sit through many hours, day and night, with Sisters in their last days?

I –we--do grieve the loss of right-here conversation with Beverly. But this grief is, as St. Paul says, not a grief without hope. We do have hope, that in the fullness of life God, there is a festival of mercy, love, and peace. That is Bev's now.