



Sister Maureen (Josephine) Rose, OP

(1935 – 2014)

Sister Maureen Rose wrote in her autobiography:

The community of Edmonds Dominicans has been very good to me and I am grateful to God, my Edmonds Dominican sisters, my family and friends for traveling with me and giving me support through the journey of my life.

The Edmonds Dominicans merged with the Adrian Dominicans in 2003.

On March 9, 1935, Albert R. and Catherine Elizabeth Rose welcomed into their family a baby daughter, their second child, whom they named Josephine Victoria after her grandmothers. She was always called “Jo.”

The Roses lived in Canada, in Greenwood, British Columbia. In her autobiography Sister Maureen described her birthplace as “a small town that boasted a population of slightly over one hundred.” She was preceded by a sister, Yvonne, and followed by Alberta and Donald. The three girls joyfully welcomed their brother. Sister wrote, “From that day on, we had a king in our midst!”

Sister’s parents considered education very important. Jo started kindergarten, but soon dropped out because she missed her sister Alberta so much. The next year she was enrolled in first grade at Greenwood Elementary School. When, two years later, the family moved to New Westminster, British Columbia, Sister Maureen attended Providence St. Genevieve School through eighth grade, then transferred to St. Ann Academy, also in New Westminster, from which she graduated in June 1953. She wrote that her teachers provided her a good background for college.

She was at first attracted to the Sisters of St. Ann, and applied to enter that congregation. She changed her mind, however, when it became apparent that the St. Ann sisters were steeped in the French-Canadian culture. She spoke to a priest-friend, wrote to several communities, and narrowed her selection to the Everett Dominicans, based in Washington State in the United States, and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace. After visiting both congregations, she felt that God was calling her to the Everett Dominicans.

On September 7, 1953, at the age of eighteen, Sister Maureen entered the postulate of the Everett Dominicans, who later became known as the Edmonds Dominicans when they moved their Motherhouse to Edmonds, Washington. On June 13, 1954, with her group she received the habit and her religious name. After a two-year novitiate, Sister Maureen professed her first vows on June 14, 1956. For two years after profession she attended Maryhurst College, just outside of Portland, Oregon, and Holy Names College in Spokane, Washington. In 1958 she received a bachelor’s degree with a major in education from Holy Names College.

Sister Maureen had the desire to teach kindergarten, but, when asked, agreed to teach high school math. Her first assignment was to Holy Angels High School in Seattle, where for seven years she taught girls, some of whom were only about six years younger than she was. For the next two years she taught at Blanchet High School, also in Seattle.

In 1967, Sister Maureen was appointed novice mistress and was responsible for the novices and one postulant. The next year she became junior directress and taught at Blanchet High School part-time. From 1969 to 1982, she continued teaching part-time at Blanchet High School, but was also involved in formation work with prospective applicants.

In 1982, Sister Maureen was elected to the congregational leadership team as coordinator of community life. When her term expired four years later, she removed her name from nomination for a second term and taught for a year at Eastside Catholic School in Bellevue, Washington, then returned to Blanchet High School for three years. In all, she taught at Blanchet High School for nineteen years.

Again elected to the leadership team as coordinator of community life in 1990, Sister Maureen served in that capacity for eight years. One of her projects during that time was finding volunteer sisters to use linseed oil yearly on the woodwork at the Motherhouse, Rosary Heights.

Her file contains a series of comical letters sent out to the members of the congregation. During the project and after its completion, she also wrote hilarious poetic parodies: *The Hound of Linseeders*, *'Twas the Night Before Linseeding*, *'Twas the Night After Linseeding*, and *Halls*, which she signed "Sister Maureen Kilmore Rose," as it was based on *In Flanders Fields*. Included also was *The Rule of St. Linseedine, OP, Worker and Martyr*, and a parody on Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech. A comic drawing accompanied the poetry. These writings must have amused and entertained those who responded to the call. It is regrettable that some of her compositions could not be quoted in this story. They certainly show great creative talent.

When her term was over, she decided that she would not return to the classroom, and she became interested in adult education. She asked for and spent a sabbatical time taking a course and workshops in English as a Second Language and Adult Basic Education and earning a certificate from Seattle University. She also visited literacy centers.

In January of 2000, Project LIFE (Literacy Is For Everyone) opened in Yakima, Washington, with twenty tutors and a long list of students. Grants had been received from the Edmonds Congregation, the Washington State Adult Literacy Department, and several other organizations. She wrote, "God blessed my ministry from its very beginnings." In her file are copies of articles that appeared in two Washington newspapers concerning Project Life, including her picture, and also articles that appeared in various newsletters.

In 2002, Sister Maureen left Yakima to attend a community meeting in Seattle, for a discussion on merging with another religious community. On her way to Seattle, she became ill, and soon she was under a doctor's care and taken to Assumption Convent in Seattle, where she remained for nine years, with a short stay at St. Joseph Residence.

The Edmonds Dominicans had merged with the Adrian Dominicans in 2003, and in October 2011 Sister Maureen and her friend, Sister Mina Riggs, moved into Regina Residence in Adrian, Michigan, where they lived for a year. In November 2012, it was necessary for Sister Maureen to move into the Dominican Life Center/Maria, where she remained until her death on May 30, 2014, at the age of seventy-nine.

A wake-remembrance service was held for Sister Maureen on June 3 in St. Catherine Chapel. Sister Maria Goretti Browne, Vicarress of Holy Rosary Mission Chapter, extended sympathy and welcomed those who had assembled to bid Sister Maureen farewell.

Sister Maria Goretti summarized Sister Maureen's life and ministry, and added:

It was Sister Maureen who brought up the idea (many years ago) that the Edmonds Congregation should seriously look at merger with the Adrian Dominicans. When she was on the Council, she worked toward that merger. When the merger finally took place, she was ill and unable to participate with either the Sisters in Edmonds or in Adrian. Sister Janet Capone [Adrian Congregational Prioress at the time] visited the sisters in Seattle, and it was then that Sister Maureen and the Sisters there were able to take their vows as Adrian Dominicans.

After she moved to Adrian, Sister Maureen was as involved as she was able in a Mission Group while she lived in Regina. Then she moved over to Maria and again was involved—baking cookies, watching movies, making decorations—whatever she was asked to do until she became ill again and unable to be involved. She lived with pain for many years. When, finally, she was put on Hospice, the pain was relieved.

Remembrances were read from several sisters.

From Sister Sharon Park: *I have known Sister Maureen for almost fifty years, since the time she was placed in charge of us, "the Junior Sisters." It was fun to have Sister Maureen, as she was tolerant enough to put up with our attempts to inculturate into religious life, but at the same time our not wanting to take life too seriously. Her sense of humor was such that she could laugh at almost everyone's humor. Her own humor and creativity were primarily demonstrated through her writings in prose and poetry.*

In 2002 she became seriously ill and was never able to work again. She was so tolerant and even cheerful during these many years of restrictions. Often her former students came to visit, and at Christmas she received at least 100 cards with pictures of her students and their families. She taped these cards to her walls and door. She will be missed by many of us, and we are better persons for her presence in our lives.

From Sister Janice Holkup: *I remember her being taught to drive by her former student, Wayne Slater, who was by then a Seattle cop. She was friends with the whole family, and always had them out to Rosary Heights during the summer. ... She taught both Wayne and his brother at Blanchet High School. Jim Pinsoneault, former vice principal at Blanchet, picked her up at Rosary Heights each day to take her to school. ... She would set up her breakfast each evening in*

the kitchen, so she could eat and be ready on time. ... I suspect everyone remembers that she knit baby outfits for numerous babies. She was always so excited about babies.

From Sister Virginia Pearson: *Although I have many memories, from delightful to sad, I have been thinking mostly of the many times we shared prayer over the phone. ... We used Dominican Praise and Living with Christ as our resources. ... I remember her sweet simplicity in expressing her desire to be more pleasing to God, and more gracious to others. ... Sometimes we shared a spiritual concern. One that came up often for both of us was, "Why can't I stay recollected after receiving Holy Communion?" Not all was serious. It couldn't be with her ready humor.*

From Sister Michele Kopp: *My most vivid memory of Sister Maureen was her yearly recruiting of us "young sisters" to come to Rosary Heights to linseed the wood throughout the main hall, the chapel, and dining room. Once I think we left the rags in a big heap on the garbage cans and almost started a fire. After we were all finished, and I think we did this for years, we were rewarded with the best lemon pie, baked by Sister Maureen.*

Sisters Mina Riggs and Joanne McCauley shared some of Sister Maureen's humorous writings that were used in the Linseed Project. They began with a short introduction, quoted in part:

The first floor of the house at Rosary Heights was all paneled oak from floor to ceiling. Once a year she wrote a letter to all the nuns in the area, asking them to come and polish the oak with linseed oil. ... She was wonderful at setting a goal and maneuvering everyone to comply.

Wayne and Clint Slater, former students of Sister Maureen, were present. Wayne, now a Seattle policeman, said in part:

I had graduated from high school ... and when I got my report card I saw that Sister Maureen had lowered my marks. ... I thought that this had ruined my chances of getting into college. I said things to her that I later regretted, and I left in a huff. My mother told me to go back and apologize, and invite her to Sunday dinner. I went back, apologized, and gave her the dinner invitation. ... She made such an impression on us at that dinner. Such a kind and gentle person she was! After that, she was invited to all our family functions. We all loved and admired her. And we will miss her.

The funeral liturgy for Sister Maureen took place on June 4. Father John Grace, chaplain at Siena Heights University, was the presider, and Sister Francine Barber was the homilist. A small part of her beautiful homily is quoted:

We are privileged to have two former students with us today who came all the way from Seattle. They considered her as part of their family, and they represent the hundreds of students who loved her dearly. If this funeral were held in Seattle, we would have to rent St. James Cathedral to accommodate them all.

For fourteen years I lived with Sister Maureen, and for eleven of those years I taught with her at Blanchet High School in Seattle. Never have I known a teacher so beloved by so many students. She had a huge fan club. It wasn't just because she was a great math teacher, which she was. It's

because she was a beautiful, joyful person who modeled all that a Christian should be. The Holy Angels alums made the comforter that was on her death bed. It was adorned with roses and an angel.

Since Sister Maureen had requested cremation, there was no burial service at the cemetery.