

Dear Marylyn,

When you were 'called' as a young woman to enter the Sisters of the Holy Names, you credited your faith and the support of a loving family with your ability to say 'yes.' You were grateful for all that God had given you and you wanted so much to give something in return. Little did you know that God had so much more to give. Ready and willing, you left Flin Flon and embarked on the adventure of a lifetime with other young women who would become life-long friends.

Who would have thought that this journey would take you-not around the world-but rather to a world entirely different from the one you had known. The journey from the suburbs to the 'inner city', from living among the middle class to being among those living below the poverty level, would be a journey that many will never take. You will be confronted by poverty and the immense suffering that accompanies it. You will be tempted to turn back to the comfort you've always known. Yet, that stubborn Irish spirit won't allow this. As you encounter those who are marginalized, be confident that you will be given the grace, compassion and courage you will need. It is in these encounters that you will meet the suffering Christ. It will be these very people who make this encounter possible. Your students will make it 'do-able', helping you to bridge the gap between the two worlds. They will respond to your invitation to come and participate in the lives of those in need. The wisdom of an eight year old aboriginal boy ("people are people") and the openness of a fourteen year old girl ("we can help, Sister") will both inspire you and give you great happiness.

You will share faith, ministry, hopes, and dreams with like-minded individuals who have caught a glimpse of the reign of God and desire to make it a reality here and now. Together, you will embrace, not only the heartaches, but the joys and the achievements of those who struggle and those who don't. Together, you will laugh and cry; you'll rage and pray...

As you remember, you will do so with a grateful heart. What a journey it will be! Who could ask for more?

Marylyn Gibney, snjm