

Sister M. Nicoletta Gargana, SC

Entered eternal life on July 10, 2022



Good Morning. I'm Sister Nicoletta's nephew John, and this is my sister Karen. We are going to share a few memories with you that my father shared with us about his sister, as well as memories from our time with her which was usually on a weekend or a holiday.

A woman known as Nicky to her sister friends, Marie to her brother, and Aunt Marie to all her nieces and nephews.

She was born weighing only two pounds and, with no incubators in 1927, they put her in a shoebox to warm her and keep her alive. Not only did she survive, but she thrived to become a strong and brave young girl. My dad says she used to love the outdoors and swim at the public pool in Keansburg, where she even dove from the high diving board. He also told me she left home to go to the Novitiate with the sisters for her high school

education and then received her bachelor's degree in education from the college right here on this campus.

It was evident that my aunt wanted to devote her life to God at an early age. We have always felt that her lifelong ministry as a Sister of Charity should be admired and applauded.

She did not drive, but we used to either pick her up at the convent or she would get a ride from one of the sisters on her visits. Our stop at the Dairy Queen with her on the way back to St. Peter's was always a wonderful way to end the weekend.

Even after my father moved out of the Middletown house, she enjoyed staying with Mary and Todd some weekends at two Ware Place. She would bring oranges with her, clean the garbage cans, and even babysit the kids.

Later in life, when visiting John and Lori in Colts Neck, she would organize their linen closets and loved to help do the laundry. They have a bedroom in their house that is still referred to as *Aunt Marie's room*.

She was always thinking of others and loved to spend time talking and sharing stories of her own. She even came home on a sabbatical to take care of her mother during the last year of her life. She was a strong woman, with a strong will, and physical strength as well. She would keep busy doing yard work for hours and chores around the house without anyone asking her to.

She also loved to spend time with her 26 great nieces and nephews. She liked throwing the ball with her great nephew Nick, teaching him to count as he tried to catch as many in a row without dropping them. He later became a particularly good baseball player, and he attributes some of those skills to the back-and-forth tosses with Aunt Marie.

Collecting stationaries for all occasions and writing letters was a favorite pastime for Aunt Marie. I am sure many of us here today can remember the handwritten stories. She loved to share what was happening in her life with her sister friends, including her work in the library or her work as a sacristan in this Chapel that we are in today.

She had everyone's address and remembered everyone's birthdays. You could always be sure of getting a card and some money for communions, birthdays, and holidays. My family reminisced this week about how thoughtful and kind she was when sending goody bags of trinkets that she bought at the dollar store.

Aunt Marie enjoyed going to retreats at San Alfonso in Long Branch and Maris Stella in Harvey Cedars, where she'd visit us at the Long Beach Island house. She loved the beach and swimming in the ocean.

Aunt Marie was humble. She would not keep the gifts that were given to her. We all received fancy soaps and religious statues growing up that were gifts originally for her. She always knew how many clothes she had in her closet and would always say she had enough.

Aunt Marie had deep faith. She gave her life to Jesus as a religious sister and devoted her life to helping others. Someday we will see you again in heaven Aunt Marie. Until then, we will miss you.

- John Gargana