



**Eulogy of Sister Mary Ann Lenore Eifert, BVM
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, Nov. 5, 2024**

Good morning. It is good to be together to celebrate the life of our Sister Mary Ann Lenore Eifert.

“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe, plans to give you a future full of hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11). God did indeed have marvelous plans for Ann Lenore during her 99 years of life.

Mary Eifert was born on Aug. 17, 1925, in Cleveland, Ohio. She was the first child of Louis and Lenore (Williams) Eifert and was later joined by brothers William and James. She played football against her two brothers with the family dog as her partner. The football was sugar in a cloth bag that the dog could carry in its mouth. She and the dog would usually win.

The family moved to Glendale, Calif., where Mary attended Holy Family School for twelve years. She played basketball in grade school and high school and held the office of secretary in high school. After graduating in 1943, she typed and filed for the Bureau of Internal Revenue in Los Angeles during that summer and then attended Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles for one year.

Mary entered the congregation on Sept. 8, 1944, and received the name Ann Lenore upon her reception on March 19, 1945. She professed her first vows on March 19, 1947, and lived 80 years as a BVM. She completed a bachelor’s degree in zoology with a minor in social studies at Mount Saint Mary’s College in Los Angeles in 1959.

Ann Lenore was an elementary school teacher for 54 years. She was missioned at St. Francis Xavier in Phoenix; All Saints in Tucson, Ariz.; Assumption in Los Angeles; St. Charles in North Hollywood, Calif.; Holy Family in Glendale, Calif.; and St. Joseph in Wichita, Kans. One of her former students wrote, “Many Holy Family Grade School students were fortunate to have Sister Mary Ann Lenore as their English and 8th grade teacher. She was the crossroad where discipline and education meet. Those who were privileged to become her students loved her for her humorous stories and engaging teaching style. . . She was unlike any other teacher you would ever encounter. . . The legacy of her marvelous teachings and wisdom will stay with countless Holy Family scholars for years to come.”

Of all her missions, Holy Family held a dear place in her heart. In an August 2007 letter, Ann Lenore wrote, “It looks as if I am the last BVM to minister in the grade school, as in November, I shall be coming to Mount Carmel as a resident. It’s a bit ironic that I began my school life as a first grader here in this very school, was here eight years in grade [school]. . . and four years at Holy Family High School across the street. [I] have been here twenty years as a grade schoolteacher and [six years as] a volunteer administrative assistant.”

Ann Lenore loved teaching and once commented, “I would teach on Saturday and Sunday, if I could get the kids to come.” Her teaching passion was science. One favorite lesson for both Ann Lenore and her students was aerodynamics taught through kite building and flying. One year she decided to tie a kite to the handles of a bike. The wind was strong enough to pull the bike and the boy without peddling across the big parking lot. Ann

Lenore belonged to the American Kite Fliers Association, was considered an expert in her field, and was often invited to discuss her project at educational seminars around the nation. When St. Francis Xavier School in Phoenix remodeled their library in 2023, Ann Lenore designed kites and created messages to be printed on them. They now hang from the library ceiling. The messages were "Trust as if everything depended on God;" "Act as if everything depended on you;" and "Go set the world on fire."

Ann Lenore also taught a course in wilderness survival to eighth graders, putting to good use her education and experiences as a member of the Desert Alpine Reserve Emergency Services (DARES), part of search and rescue efforts in Maricopa County, Ariz. She commented, "After watching various tragedies that occur in the desert, I found that not only strangers and Sunday sightseers have expired in the desert but native-born Arizonians who were careless and often died." A unique feature of the desert survival class was the optional weekend field trip at the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument west of Phoenix.

One year Ann Lenore invited the elementary school faculty, of which I was a member, for this much sought after weekend experience. It was late April, and the desert heat was approaching 100 degrees. We arrived in the late afternoon, enthusiastically setting up camp following Ann Lenore's warnings to be vigilant for Guila monsters, rattle snakes, and other desert critters. Sure enough, within 15 minutes of arrival one of our team spotted a rattle snake curled up and sunning himself. A ranger was called and came to the rescue collecting the snake to be relocated further out in the desert. At that moment, I changed my plans from sleeping on a cot six inches from the ground to a less comfortable picnic table that was much higher.

In September 2005, an article in the *Glendale News-Press* alerted the BVM West Region to a labor dispute at the Glendale Hilton Hotel. The management refused to allow the formation of a union. Ann Lenore was one of several BVMs who participated in worker demonstrations and supported the workers as they called for a boycott. The Sisters of Charity were one of the first organizations to withdraw an event from the hotel. "I'm very much in favor of the employees. It's a matter of justice," shared Ann Lenore. "Employees deserve a living wage, which includes affordable health care." She and all the BVMs and Associates who participated saw the fruit of their labor when the hotel agreed to accept the union in 2008.

Ann Lenore was well known for her two special talents. She was a superb photographer of flowers and used the photos to make pictures and note cards to give as gifts. Many of her photos brightened the hallways of the former Mount Carmel buildings through the years. Ann Lenore was also an amazing baker, her specialty, cinnamon bread. She learned to bake bread while caring for her widowed mother and called it "100 percent recreation." Often, she would wake up at night with a new recipe adaptation to try, but once confessed that sometimes those ideas came to her while at Mass. No matter the inspiration, her delicious breads fed both the bodies and the spirits of many BVM sisters and staff.

"When you call me, when you pray to me, I will listen to you. . . Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you, says the Lord." (Jeremiah 20:12, 14). Our God to whom Ann Lenore prayed and for whom she sought was with her always, especially during her last years of diminished hearing and sight. After she was anointed, Ann Lenore expressed her affection and great gratitude to those gathered and all her BVM sisters and caregivers. She added, "I will probably get to heaven before you do, so know that I will pray for each one of you every day." One participant noted that her spirit seemed to soar like the kites she had her students build and fly.

A few days later, she made her final journey home to be welcomed by her parents, brothers, and her loving God. Every home, even a heavenly one, is surely made sweeter by a fresh loaf of cinnamon bread. Happy baking, Ann Lenore!