



**Eulogy of Sister Eugena Sullivan, BVM**  
**Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, April 21, 2025**

Good morning. It is good to be together to celebrate the life of our Sister Eugena Sullivan.

Rosalie Sullivan was born on June 26, 1931, in Chicago, the youngest child of Eugene and Mollie (Fitzgerald) Sullivan. Rosalie was always very proud of her Irish Heritage. Her parents were born in County Kerry, Ireland, and met at an Irish dance in Chicago. They never lost their Irish brogues. Her mother was a very sweet woman who managed the household and satisfied her creative streak by designing hats. Her father was a member of the 1909 Gaelic football team. He worked for Wanzer Milk Company in Chicago and was the last person to use a horse and wagon to make deliveries. He claimed the horse knew the route!

Rosalie joined siblings Eugene, Mary and John, better known as Gene, Sis and Jack, respectively. Gene, a World War II army veteran, was a Chicago police officer and later served as a truant officer for the Chicago public schools. He died in 2008. Jack also served in World War II in the army air corps and died in 2011. Her dear sister Mary died in September 2023.

Rosalie attended St. Columbanus ES and Aquinas HS on Chicago's south side. She continued her post-secondary education at Clarke College with gratitude to her oldest brother, Gene, who paid her tuition. Rosalie's first encounter with the BVMs was at Clarke. Relationships formed and deepened as time passed and she felt called to be part of the BVM congregation. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry, Rosalie entered the congregation on Sept. 8, 1953. She received the name Eugena upon her reception on March 19, 1954, professed her first vows on March 19, 1956, and lived 71 years as a BVM.

Eugena is the last of the three Sullivans in her set – Elizabeth "Betty," Mary Alma and Eugena. They even had their own song, a revision of the George M. Cohan song "Harrigan." "S-U-double L-I-V-A-N spells Sullivan. Proud of all the Irish blood that's in me . . ."

Eugena taught sixth grade at Our Lady Help of Christians in Chicago; and science at Holy Family High School in Glendale, Calif., Mater Dei High School in Santa Ana, Calif., and Regis High School in Kansas City, Mo., where she also served as chair of the science department. She earned a master's degree in education with a minor in guidance from Loyola University–Los Angeles in 1967.

With the adoption of TOPA (Totally Open Professional Application), Eugena chose to minister in an office setting rather than the classroom. She worked at Clarke College, first in the computer center, then as the registrar, a position she held for 26 years, and finally as assistant registrar. Eugena was a conscientious, hard worker driven by her concern for the students. Paying attention to details and doing the job accurately and efficiently were of the utmost importance during her 37 years of service at Clarke. It was her favorite mission. She loved ministering at Clarke as much as she loved attending Clarke. Eugena was there in 1984 when the devastating fire broke out just two days before graduation. She managed to get back into the charred building to retrieve diploma covers and arranged for a printer to print the diplomas.

Eugena was a gentle, kind and loving person who never wanted to draw attention to herself. She was far more interested in learning about people. Her concern for others was genuine, and never a means of avoiding conversation about herself. She loved to cook and was a *really* good bartender. She was generous, gracious and the essence of hospitality. She loved bringing people together and treating them, whether welcoming the new Clarke faculty by inviting them to dinner or organizing a pizza party for the members of her set who meant so much to her. She had a knack for remembering people and the connections between them. She generously gave her time as a driver shuttling sisters to Des Moines or to Chicago as needed. She also was well aware of her limits – gardening and computers were not her things!

Eugena and Sister Marguerite Neumann, a chemistry instructor at Clarke College for decades, were good friends for many years. Eugena enjoyed traveling and Marguerite was willing to “go along for the ride.” They toured the country visiting Marguerite’s relatives in the Midwest and the East and then travelled the West Coast. A wonderful trip to Ireland checked off a big item on their bucket list. Eugena and Marguerite were in the first group of sisters to move into the Circle Apartments, now called The Village. They loved living there and enjoyed the backyard parties. Marguerite’s death in 2011 left a huge hole in Eugena’s heart that could not be filled.

“Thus says the Lord, . . . You are precious in my eyes. You are honored, and I love you. Do not be afraid, for I am with you.” (Isaiah 43: 1, 4-5). Eugena experienced serious health issues for many years. It took a great effort and deep faith to keep up her spirit. Through it all, she was far more concerned about her sister Mary’s declining health. Eugena deeply loved her family and remained close to them. She was especially pleased and proud when her nieces chose to attend Clarke.

Eugena loved her life as a BVM and remained faithful to her vocation and devoted to her community. She was blessed to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee in 2023 with nine of her set members.

Death for Eugena is the glorious fulfillment of the promised union with our loving God, her parents and siblings, and her BVM sisters, especially her dear friend Marguerite. It is Eugena’s turn to be welcomed with splendid hospitality. Enjoy the party, Eugena!