

In Loving Memory of Laurette Kathleen Kelly

Laurette Kathleen (Howe) Kelly, 93, passed away peacefully on September 12, 2019 surrounded by her family. Born and raised in an Irish neighborhood on the West side of Chicago, she met her husband, Edward Kelly, in high school, and they were married for more than 70 years, raising eight children in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

They began regularly vacationing in St. Cloud after relocating Laurette's adopted mother, Angie Murphy, to Heather Hall. Laurette enjoyed St. Cloud for the spectacular daily cloud display and she often remarked that the town was aptly named. Laurette and Ed retired in St. Cloud, and they cared for Angie, until her death at 101 years of age.

Laurette studied and had a keen interest in and acceptance of all religions, but she was deeply committed to the Catholic faith from an early age. She was a Franciscan covenant companion for more than 36 years, and she instilled in her children a devotion to the Holy Trinity and the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is a great comfort to them especially now at this time of loss. Laurette studied and emulated the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare; her library is filled with books about their teachings and her garden surrounds a statue of St. Francis. She was proud of the Franciscan social justice movement, especially their advocacy for disadvantaged families and for unaccompanied minors.

Laurette was incredibly kind and compassionate, volunteering in many religious and civic organizations. She was an active member of the National Council of Catholic women, the St. Thomas' Ladies of Charity, Christ Renews His Parish, Bible studies, Prison Ministry and Rosary groups. She was a Eucharistic Minister, and she volunteered at Give Kids the World and Elmer's Kitchen in Kissimmee, Florida. While raising her eight children in Glen Ellyn, she was active in St. Petronille Church ministries, the Cursillo movement, and Christian Family Camp. She taught catechism to children with mental disabilities, and she opened her home in the summer to disadvantaged children. As Sister Georgine Wilson noted, this is how Laurette lived the Gospel through her life in profound ways.

Laurette became the hit of the neighborhood when she began working for a Mars candy distributor and generously shared candy samples with all the kids. She loved to play bridge with her girlfriends at Pheasant Run—and anywhere else she could gather a foursome. She received a grant to attend nursing school at the age 56, and thereafter, she worked at the Glen Ellyn medical clinic, as well as various nursing homes. She loved to travel, so at the age of 75, she quit nursing and began working for United Airlines, cleaning airplanes at O'Hare Airport, in order to take advantage of free airfare. She traveled all over Europe, Mexico and the United States.

She had a great sense of humor, which together with her deep religious faith, helped her endure many tragedies, including the loss of both her mother and her brother Jacky at an early age, a miscarriage, the loss of her son, Sean Martin, and her grandsons, Matthew Francis and Redmond Emmet. She was raised by her

grandparents, Lizzie (Grimes) O'Connell and John O'Connell, a sergeant in the Chicago police force, who taught her to believe that God would care for her in times of trouble and to always care for those less fortunate.

She was a great dancer—she loved the big bands of the swing era and she could jitter bug and Charleston for hours on end. She also enjoyed family parties where everyone sang Irish ballads and old rebel songs. She brought family and friends together for a joyous event for herself and her husband, Ed, when they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, and in the invitation, she reminded us that she was like a butterfly with gossamer wings. She was a confidante to many and source of consolation to us all. She mothered not only her own eight biological children, but countless others, many of whom sought refuge at 407 Turner Avenue and called it home for a period of time. She could comfort a crying baby like no other. She forgave all her children's mistakes made in distress, and she held them close in times of unhappiness, when their dreams were blue. One of her favorite Bible passages is from Mark, Chapter 10, 13-16:

Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples scolded the people. When Jesus noticed this, he was upset and said to his disciples, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to these. I assure you that whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them and blessed them.

Laurette's compassion for children was the foundation for her support of the Civil Rights Movement and her belief that Dr. King spoke the truth when he preached "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." She would have marched with Dr. King for equality but for her obligation to care for her growing brood of children. Years later, she traveled by bus to Springfield, Illinois to urge legislators to support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Her belief in tolerance and equality for all has been and always will be a source of inspiration to all the children she mothered.

Laurette is survived by her husband, Edward Joseph; her children, Mary, Ed, Sarah, Mark, Matt, Amy and Michael; her daughters-in-law, Laura, Kristen, Janna; and Jenny; her grandchildren, Shannon, Caitlin, Veronica, Amy, Deirdre, Brendan, Dustin, Michelle, Keaton, and Danny Jo; her great-grandchildren, Korey, Daisy, Shane, Vada, and Josie; as well as many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

Please pray for the souls of her faithfully departed family members: Grandparents Lizzie and John O'Connell; parents Ellen and Thomas Howe; adopted mother Angie Murphy, brothers Jacky and Tom Howe; mother-in-law and father-in-law Sarah and J. Frank Kelly; sister Betty Boyle; sister-in-law Barbara Kelly; brothers-in-law Jeremiah Bransfield, Bud Kelly, Gene Kelly and James Boyle; son Sean Martin Kelly; grandsons Matthew Francis Kelly and Redmond Emmet Lyons-Keefe; nephew Michael Kelly and nieces Katie Kelly and Peig Boyle.