

**Remarks by Josephine Trueschler '49 in Memory of Maura Eichner, SSND '41**  
**November 20, 2009**

Sister Maura loved the beauty of this campus. The grandeur of the giant oaks standing steadfast in the valley amid the maples – everything aflame with color – filling the air – with the glow of red and gold from ground to treetop.

She loved the sweet gum trees. Those yellow leaves – falling like stars along the pathways in and out of Fourier; the now single walnut – stark and still – leaning a little away from the windows of LeClerc.

Sister loved the little cemetery on the Homeland Hill where once the wild arbutus grew. She loved the lilacs of springtime near Theresa Hall, the weeping cherries around the Library Pond; the violets everywhere, the lilies of the valley in the walled garden of Fourier which always come to bloom (no matter how chill or wet the April weather) just in time for her May 5 birthday.

Once she, herself, planted Shakespeare tulips in a narrow garden along the downhill path into Fourier, below Meletia. Beauty was always in her eyes.

As we all now know Sister Maura requested no eulogies during these final public steps of letting her go. We know, too, that Sister asked for little while living among us – perhaps nothing at all – so we are bound to feel the constraint of her wish.

She has given us her word – precious and profound – over and over again in her books of poetry: Why add glosses to those revelations of love?

Sister Maura shared everything with us, embraced us all in her love for The Word and for the World.

Her mind was always at prayer.

Her joy in going off to teach a class – book in hand – but nothing else – showed in her quick and graceful step. Studying with students was her daily pilgrimage, the classroom holy ground. Her incisive critical thought taught her students reverence for the secrets of hope and honor held within the human heart, dreamed of in the imagination, necessary to the well-being of the soul.

In an essay published just a few weeks ago, titled “Sister is Ever the Teacher,” Sister Mary Ellen Dougherty has given us a gift for these days and for all the days to come. When she writes “[Sister Maura] was quiet and spectacular at the same time,” she captures the whole, ineffable mystery of our teacher, our poet, our friend.

Sister Maura could – with a smile, a gentle gesture, a pause, a silent look of understanding, speak volumes – tell us – that “the word is love.”

The history of this College, the character of Notre Dame, has been illumined and sustained by the long tradition and presence of the School Sisters. The future of this institution is in the lifelines, the eternal lifelines, of Sister Maura and the distinguished litany of SSNDs who have gone to God before this season of our loss. The vocational leadership of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is held in the two words that Sister Maura thought marked the journey of humankind beginning with the creation of Adam: God's word is "Come." Our word is "Yes." Sister saw in this the plan for our happiness, our peace, our possibility, our joy.

Let us go out from this day knowing that Sister Maura is radiant in the love of God as she was even in this life; let us remember that she loved this College, that she loved all of us – wrote of her love for the whole world in these words (from "Walking on Water"): "Listening to those I love – my family, my sisters, students, friends, neighbors, everyone I meet and those whom I have never met but whose presence I sense, too, I hear them saying 'Sister, speak to me of God.'" And every graceful step she took on this campus, every class she taught showed us this beautiful promise in God's word: "Come," and our word: "Yes."

"Again, she commands the grand silence." (Sister Mary Ellen's final sentence.)

But she has written: "I am listening."

She has her ear against our hearts.