

## **Sister Ellen Margaret Staiger, SC**

Entered eternal life on May 5, 2020

In the gift of life, God reveals Himself in us and through us. The roots of His gift of faith unfold in love for others and actions of service. Sister Ellen Margaret's journey of life revealed God's gifts within her through a smile of greeting and appreciation.

Through the gift of her family, Sister Ellen received love, the ability to be open to friendships and, like all children, the challenges of growing to discover ourselves and the call from God for our life's journey of service. In the midst of all the experiences, she heard God's call to religious life and willingly gave herself to Him so that her daily life in prayer and companionship would form her to give herself generously to care of the needs of others. This daily caring for others, whether they be children, the sick or the elderly, depends on a deepening relationship with God to be a sign of His revealing presence to the unique and diverse character of each person we encounter. In the years that Sister Ellen served children, patients in hospitals or the senior Sisters at the Villa, she was strengthened interiorly by God to genuinely offer the assistance required by the individual as well as to confront the interior challenges and stress that such intensity places on the care-giver. During these years of daily attention to others, Sister Ellen remained rooted in the calming experience of Jesus in the Eucharist and in her daily prayer and devotion to Mother Mary. She also discovered a gift for knitting and crocheting that she really enjoyed as she was creating a unique pattern of design and color to give as a gift to someone. These opportunities gave her the clarity to find the balance that God blesses in life between our inner maturity in faith and its expression through gifts of service to others.



As the time came to become a member of the community at the Villa, Sister Ellen had, like everyone in her life does, to learn to make adjustments for new patterns of daily life -not always easy to accept. The foundation would remain the same - openness to God through the daily Eucharist and prayer to stay centered in her trust of Him, attentive care and strength for the inner challenges. As always, with new challenges, come new opportunities and the stability of some old ones. Sister Ellen found a place in the choir of the Villa which was a joy to her. She discovered the weekly and monthly gatherings of the residents for games and entertainment. These she found allowed for renewing and building friendships that nurtured all participants. She continued her gift of knitting and crocheting in her room which was a calming focus as always.... a gift intended to be shared.

In the later years, God invited Sister Ellen to more adjustments in spirituality, internal and external, as her needs changed and she was bound to a wheelchair. Further physical issues caused the need for greater assistance in routine daily life. Each adjustment was an opportunity to accept the depth of faith that enabled it.

The call of God never ends and touches our depth of faith for acceptance. The final days of Sister Ellen's life with us were signs of the continued blessings with which God strengthened her and renewed His peace within her. That joyful "hello" and smile were the expressions of a deeply rooted faith and trust in God. The memory of them, as Sister Ellen's gifts from God to us, will never end.

Rev. Francis Duffy