

# Remembering



Sister Kathleen Corbett, CSJ

January 26, 1934—November 27, 2016

**K**athleen Mary Corbett was born at St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco, California on January 26, 1934. She was the third in a family of four living children born to Josephine Wood Corbett and Eugene Joseph Corbett.

Several years before Kathleen was born, her mother had received her degree as a registered nurse from St. Mary's Hospital School of Nursing in San Francisco.

Kathleen's dad owned and operated the NEW PROCESS LAUNDRY in San Francisco, a business which his father had founded in the late 1800's. Kathleen, her sister, Mary, and her brothers, Gene and Jim, attended Star of the Sea Elementary School in San Francisco. The school, at that time, was totally staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Both Mary and Kathleen attended Star of the Sea Academy. It was during her years as a student that Kathleen grew to love

the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Kathleen enjoyed playing on the school volleyball and basketball teams and on class teams. She also enjoyed being on a swimming team outside of the school sports program, horseback riding, and playing tennis. During her senior year Kathleen served as Student Body President at Star of the Sea Academy.

In September of 1951 Kathleen joined 33 other young women to begin her postulate at St. Mary's Academy in Los Angeles, California. When she received the Habit of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in March of 1952, she was given the name, Sister Eugene Joseph. She pronounced her first vows on March 19, 1954, and final vows on August 15, 1960. Subsequently, in 1971, she returned to her baptismal name.

**A**fter profession of vows, Kathleen taught in elementary schools for 24 years in various locations:

Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, Oxnard, Laguna Beach, Lafayette, Concord, Fresno and San Diego. She taught children in grades one through eight. Kathleen also served as principal of Most Precious Blood School (now known as St. Francis School) in Concord, California.

**I**n 1978, using her teaching and administrative skills and experience, Kathleen began 16 years of service in the Diocese of San Diego Office for the Missions; The Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood Association. She shared this ministry with Sister Mary Ellen Kowalski a lifetime friend. It was a commitment that brought out the best in both of them: to advance the missions, to travel to missionary countries, and to inspire missionary generosity in Catholic school students as well as adults. A part of this ministry was to visit schools. When she appeared on campus the students would greet her as: Sister Prayer and Witness! Some of the missionary countries she visited with Mary Ellen were: Chile, Peru and Haiti, and both attended International Mission Conferences in England and Ireland. Acquainted with so many different religious communities serving in San Diego provided them with a connection and/or hospitality in almost any country they visited in Europe.

On one occasion they followed a Missionary conference with a trip to Germany. There, a relative of Sister Loretta Flood, Ben Wetlow who had a car dealership in San Diego County, arranged for them to take a brand new car touring all over Europe. They were instructed to leave the car at the airport in Paris and it would be shipped to Mr. Deflow's dealership. What a wonderful "perk" for years of outreach and support for the missions. Kathleen maintained an open heart for those in faraway countries even after this

remarkable ministry.

While Kathleen was ministering in San Diego, quite by accident she and Mary Ellen heard a radio announcement that the University was providing free tests for diabetes. Both decided to go. It was then Kathleen learned that she had diabetes, a disease which required daily monitoring, and which became more problematic towards the end of her life.

**D**uring the 1994-1995 school year, Kathleen was gifted by the Community with a sabbatical year at the Graduate Theological Union, School of Applied Theology in Berkeley, California. Upon completion of her sabbatical, Kathleen began service for the Diocese of Oakland, in Catholic Ministry, at Alta Bates Medical Center, now known as Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, in Berkeley, California. Kathleen loved this ministry and was able to serve there for several years. While ministering there, Kathleen underwent a double by-pass heart surgery. She described a near death experience during the procedure. Following that, Kathleen's health began to decline leading to Kathleen's choice to become part of Holy Family community.

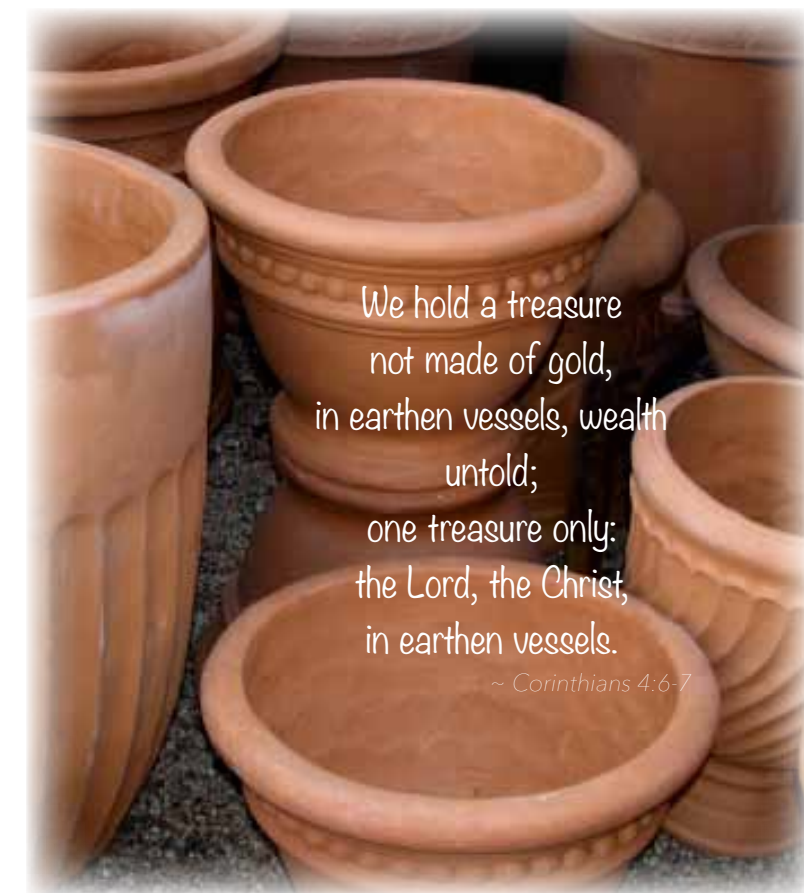
Kathleen was gifted with a sharp mind and a penchant for perfection. She was a person who could engage in conversation with anyone. A born leader, this quality often got her in trouble with some superiors in her early life.

As the management of her diabetes became particularly problematic, Kathleen opted to remain in her room more than usual. In June of 2016 Kathleen suffered fractures: to her femur and ankle. After initial treatment at the hospital, she was discharged to a Rehabilitation facility. While struggling to walk during Physical Therapy, she

collapsed became unconscious and was rushed to emergency. Kathleen described this experience as having a second near-death experience. She yearned to come home to Carondelet Center and her wish was granted. Her sister, Mary, was able to visit her here shortly before her death. With her community gathered around, she was anointed on Thanksgiving morning. She went quietly to God shortly thereafter.

**S**he is survived by her elder brother Father Eugene Corbett, S.J., her sister Mary McCaffrey, to whom she spoke every day by phone, her nephew Christopher McCaffrey and niece Karen Corbett Woods. Her younger brother James Corbett, DVM, died shortly before her own death while she was in rehabilitation. Her suffering is over and she is enjoying eternal peace—and now celebrating a well-deserved reward for a long life of dedicated prayer and witness as a CSJ. ✨

*Written by Sisters Kathleen Corbett, CSJ and Annette Debs, CSJ*



We hold a treasure  
not made of gold,  
in earthen vessels, wealth  
untold;  
one treasure only:  
the Lord, the Christ,  
in earthen vessels.

~ Corinthians 4:6-7