Sr. Rosina Ann Funeral

With sadness, sorrow and Christian hope we gather this morning to entrust Sr. Rosina Ann in to the hand of God. And yet, as we do so, we find comfort because it is the Lord’s hand into which we commend her. Last night we heard about her through her own words and those of her Benedictine Sisters. Sr. Rosina Ann being a rather humble, obscure community member—not drawing a lot of attention to herself, despite her being a liver transplant recipient, and the 1\textsuperscript{st} such from Mayo almost 30 years ago—would have wanted few words, and certainly not a lot of accolades about her goodness, her life or her health situations. Sr. knew she was dying and so took care of all the details of her funeral; for quite some time she literally kept death daily before her, sought forgiveness of her sisters, received the sacraments, etc. She died prepared, at peace and gently without a lot of fanfare—the way she lived.

When she was just 4 days old, the Lord first stretched out his hand to Rosina Ann in Baptism. In the waters of Baptism, she was washed clean of the stain of sin; she was welcomed as a child of God and a member of the Church. Looking back on her life, we know that the hand of the Lord did not abandon her, but remained constantly with her.

The Lord stretched out his hand to her again on June 4, 1950 when she received the sacrament of Penance and Holy Communion. She participated in those sacraments countless times throughout her life as the Lord continued to extend his hand to her in forgiveness and love, and offering himself to her as a foretaste of that heavenly banquet we heard of in Isaiah a few minutes ago. Both of these sacraments strengthening her to follow God more closely in the Christian, Benedictine life.

Sr. Rosina Ann was confirmed in the Holy Spirit on Oct. 18, 1950. As one of her confessors I can tell you the Holy Spirit gifted her in a special way. She was one of those extremely rare penitents who knew herself so well and so deeply. She knew her sins—she made no excuses for them, no justifications but I was always so amazed that she could articulate so humbly and so honestly the motivations behind them and...so utterly, genuinely believed in God’s forgiveness and love for her. I often felt I was the recipient of that sacrament in her presence, not the minister.

The Lord stretched out his hand to her in the Anointing of the Sick as he strengthened and supported her with his grace in the final years, months and days so that her hope would be “full of immortality.”
Sr. Rosina Ann wanted God’s hand, yearned for his hand, welcomed his hand. And even now this morning, the Lord stretches out his hand to her, to escort her into that “dwelling place not made with hands, eternal in heaven.”

Indeed, the Lord stretches out his hand to each of us every day of our lives, never forcing us to take his hand. He offers it to us and it requires that we also stretch out our hands to his. To take the Lord’s hand can be risky, and even frightening because he leads us into the unknown and tells us to follow him with trust. Sr. certainly experienced that in her commitment to take the Lord’s hand in monastic profession in this community. Varied assignments and locations throughout her 50+ years, some more pleasant and challenging than others, but all of them fulfilling and opportunities to grow in her faith, trust and love of God...and her community. Sacred Heart Monastery and all the missions and assignments offered her opportunities to daily follow Christ by “not worrying about her life; over what to eat or what to wear, or her body.” And to daily die to oneself to produce much fruit.

These past few months and weeks have not been the easiest for Sr. Rosina but you all surrounded her with your presence, your love, your prayers; and your patience and forgiveness. You have also been the hand of God extended to her. Your devotion to her is a testament to a life well-lived and your love for her will not weaken with her death. As St. Augustine said, “We have loved him in life. Let us not forget him in death.” The same can be said of Sr. Rosina.

How will you continue to love and remember her? By living as she did: dying to yourself so that others might live and flourish, always following the example of Christ. If we take the hand of Christ each day and follow where he leads us, not counting the cost, then we shall abide with him in love.

Let us then commend Sr. Rosina Ann into the hand of God. May the Lord honor his servant and welcome her into his heavenly home, that having taken his hand, she might see God face to face.