



## Eulogy for Therese Gaunt

St. Augustine Church

Tuesday, July 15, 2014

Mom was born in Pawtucket, Rhode Island in 1920. She was one of 9 children born to Ildephonse and Emilie Charest.

There is longevity in Mom's family. Out of 9 siblings, remaining are 3 sisters and 2 brothers ranging in ages from 87 to 96: Lucille Duclos, Claire Forand, George Charest of Woonsocket, Rosaire Charest (Uncle Joe) from Virginia, and Noella Papagno from Florida.

Mom married at the age of 19 on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1939. Had she still been with my father, they would have celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last week. Mom comes from good French Canadian stock, outlived 3 husbands and survived two bouts of cancer. Mom had 7 children: Pauline, Roland, Jeannine, Richard, Denis, Paul and Ronnie but lost 4. She had a total of nine grandchildren, 19 great grandchildren, and seven great-great grandchildren.

She worked in several area textile mills including the "Masurel Worsted" and "Bonin Spinning" for many years before joining my sister and me in California in 1967 with my 3 youngest brothers, Denis, Paul and Ronnie. In fact, it was this experience (working in the mills) that helped Mom land a job as an assembly line worker for Lenkurt, an electronics company, in Menlo Park, California. They were really impressed with Mom's background as a "twister." And impressed that Mom was working nights (third shift) and still managed to take care of her three children. Really!! At that time the

“twist” was quite the dance rage in San Francisco. The manager looked up textile mills and discovered that a “twister” was the name given to an operator working the frames that held more than 100 spindles and when the thread broke, the operator would reconnect the threads with a knot known as a “twister’s knot.” That story has been repeated many, many times.

While working at Lenkurt, she pursued her high school diploma, ultimately graduating with honors from San Mateo High School at the age of 54. The diploma was not a GED diploma but a full-fledged high school diploma.

A few years after moving to San Mateo she met Joe Floro and was married to him for 20 years. During that time Mom was coaxed into beginning her own travel club by the residents of the Rancho Grande Mobile Home Park. That resulted in the founding of the Rancho Grande Travel Club which she operated until 1990 when she moved back home to Massachusetts with Joe. During those years she traveled the world visiting six continents and 33 countries (18 European, 7 Asian, 4 Mediterranean, 1 African, and 3 North American countries).

Richard was building an in-law unit for Mom and Joe, but Joe died from Cancer before the unit was completed. Mom lived there alone until she met a wonderful gentleman by the name of Clifton Gaunt. He was 93 years old, 20 years her senior, who lived down the street.

A romance started to bloom. They both started to discuss marriage and eventually Clifton proposed. Mom was 73. The town’s people gossiped about this marriage but Mom put their tongues to rest. They were married for 11 years. During their marriage, they crossed

the United States three times, and spent several winters in Florida until Clifton passed away at 104.

To keep Clifton occupied while Mom was crocheting, she taught Clifton how to do latch hooking. He never thought he would become a “hooker” at the age of 94. He “hooked” at least a dozen rugs approximately 36 x 48 inches. One of his hooked rugs, the face of Jesus hangs in your Church Hall.

Mom loved to crochet. She crocheted at least 20 lace tablecloths, at least a six-month project, and at least 200–300 various size doilies. I have them all over my house. And in the last few years she was crocheting knit caps. Every great grandchild and great great-grandchild has received a knit cap from Memere.

Living next door to Mom and Clifton, Richard developed a very close relationship with the both of them. After Clifton died at 104 and Mom could no longer drive her car, the family felt that Mom was too isolated and lonely and needed to be around people. Two years ago we looked into high rise apartments and she loved the idea of moving to Crepeau Court.

Richard and Judy would often take Mom out on mystery trips. One time, they took Mom to the seashore in a wheelchair. Pretty rough wheeling her in the sand. This couple was approaching them and Richard asked them, “How far is it to New Jersey?”

Two years ago my cousin Roger moved from Southern California to Woonsocket after his mother, Aunt Rita, died. She told him to take care of Aunt Theresa. We’re so very grateful and appreciative that he moved here. He and Mom were like two peas in a pod. Both are Gemini and got along great together. He was Mom’s chauffeur and

offered to take her to her doctors' appointments and even take Mom and Aunt Lucille every Friday to the beauty shop to get their hair done. He would read a book while waiting for them

For 50 years living in California, I've had to pay attention to the 3 hour time difference. Many times I'd call Mom at 6:30 pm my time which was 9:30 pm her time, she knew right away who was calling. I'd say, "Getting ready for bed?" What did you do today? Are you exercising? Mom would say, "Oh yes, I walked around the building twice today." She probably had her fingers crossed. I will miss those times.

Mom always said she didn't want to be a burden to the family. She didn't want to go to a nursing home or linger. She was not a burden and she will be sorely missed.

#### THIS IS AN IRISH FUNERAL PRAYER

You can only have one mother, Patient kind and true;  
No other friend in all the world, Will be the same to you.  
When other friends forsake you, To mother you will return.  
For all her loving kindness, She asks nothing in return.  
As we look upon her picture, Sweet memories we recall.  
Of a face so full of sunshine, And a smile for one and all.  
Sweet Jesus, take this message, To our dear mother up above;  
Tell her how we miss her, And give her all our love.

