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SPECIAL



SECTION

A "NEW-AGE" LEADER

One of the special graces in my life was the privilege and pleasure of serving in leadership and living in community with Sr. Mary Concilia Moran, RSM. I have many precious memories of her keen mind, intuitive spirit, and warm heart. As a leader in both religious life and in the healthcare ministry, she was an agent of change, a shaper of dreams, and an enabler of persons.

Sr. Mary Concilia was the first post-Vatican II superior of the Sisters of Mercy of the Union. She brought her youth, her energy, and her joy in her vocation to the task of reshaping our religious institute along the lines mandated by the council. She broke the mold for "mothers general" by modeling a personal style that was welcoming and inclusive.

Concilia had a sympathetic understanding of the power of symbol, especially the symbols of hospitality. Before Concilia became superior, our generalate building was rather austere and monastic. Once she assumed office, Concilia soon carpeted and refurbished many areas, creating warm centers for community living and hospitality. Artwork and fresh flowers added to the sense of welcome. Visitors frequently found flowers, a small gift, or the latest book or magazine in their rooms. The unspoken message to every sister was, This is your home; please enjoy it.

The experience of affirmation went deeper, through, as Concilia prompted the organization

*Sr. Concilia
Moran's
Vision and
Spirit
Helped
Shape
Today's
Concept of
Sponsorship*

BY SR. DORIS
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of myriad programs for the sisters' development. These programs for jubilarians, sisters preparing for vows, provincial leaders, and others integrated prayer, community experiences, theological updating, reflection on religious life, and appreciation of the arts—years before the phrase "holistic living" was coined. Participation in such programs helped reshape our corporate identity.

Another example of Concilia's approach to congregational leadership was her use of the spoken and written word. Poetry and prose were combined in her messages of hope and inspiration to the community. In her dialogues with the official Church she interpreted and defended the changes we were making with gentle firmness. In dealing with troubled sisters or situations of conflict, she projected a calm and caring demeanor, which helped participants sort out and deal with their issues.

Finally, Concilia's reach was expansive and inclusive. An ardent supporter of the Mercy Federation, she planted seeds of unity whose fruits we all enjoy today. Sisters from independent Mercy congregations in the United States and abroad were frequent visitors and participants in programs at the Union generalate. The 1981 worldwide celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Mercy was her inspiration.

It is not surprising that Concilia brought these same abilities to use symbols, to develop persons, to articulate a vision, and to reach out and include others to the healthcare ministry. Her involvement in this ministry spanned years of enormous change, from individual freestanding

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Sr. Moran



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A "NEW-AGE" LEADER

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The old expressions of accountability and relationship were no longer appropriate.

institutions accountable to congregational superiors to large and complex systems with multiple boards of trustees. Along the way, Concilia served in nearly every role in health-care: nurse, hospital administrator, provincial superior, institute superior, hospital and system trustee, and system executive.

This experience helped her recognize that the old expressions of accountability and relationship were no longer appropriate to the ministry. In the late 1970s she adopted the concept of "sponsorship" to describe and symbolize the new relationship between the religious congregation and its institutional ministries. This new vision required new perceptions, new skills, new practices, and new structures for the mission of Catholic healthcare to continue. Concilia pioneered the development of these tools of sponsorship through mission effectiveness policies and programs. Ever a developer of people, she welcomed interns and visi-

tors from other health systems in the United States and abroad.

Concilia brought her two spheres of leadership together in the special attention she gave to preparing Sisters of Mercy for trusteeship. As she said to a gathering of sisters in Des Moines, in April 1978:

We are shortchanging our ministry of healing if we restrict our vision of healthcare to the survival of our immediate hospitals or healthcare centers, ignoring the larger concerns and issues of human need; if we lose sight of sharing our expertise and insights with others in the healthcare apostolate; or [if we] neglect to use our corporate resources to effect legislation for better, more equalized healthcare.

Sr. Mary Concilia's vision and spirit are as relevant today as when those words were spoken! □

SR. MORAN AND THE LEADERSHIP FORUM

Sr. Mary Concilia Moran, RSM, believed leaders' principal task is to create the future. With this in mind, the Friends of Sister Mary Concilia Moran established the Sister Mary Concilia Moran Leadership Forum after Sr. Moran's death in 1990. The forum provides an opportunity for Catholic health ministry leaders to address critical issues through dialogue and expression of their viewpoints.

Anne Amelia Moran was born in 1930 in Altoona, PA. She entered religious life in 1948 and made her final profession in 1954. In 1970 Sr. Moran became administrator general of the Sisters of Mercy for nine provinces of the Union of the Sisters of Mercy in the United States. Seven years later she became president of the Federation of Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, a 10,570-member organization formed by all Mercy communities based in the Western Hemisphere.

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