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We remember...

On June 18, 2007, Sister Andrée Fries, CPPS, Executive Director of NRRO, entered Good Samaritan Hospital in Baltimore for knee replacement surgery. She scheduled the surgery for early summer because this is a slower time for our office and because she wanted to be well enough to travel to the LCWR and CMSM Assemblies that would be held in early August. Little did she, or any of us, expect that she would never return to the ministry to which she was so deeply committed. As the result of multiple complications following the surgery, Andrée went home to the arms of her loving God on July 14, 2007.

“You know what to do.” These were the final words of Sister Andrée’s life, spoken to me right before she was placed on a respirator on June 26.

“You know what to do.” These words are so typical of Andrée! Her confidence and trust were capable of calling forth gifts and abilities in me and in others that none of us even dreamed we had. Her final words also affirm the belief she voiced in this newsletter in September 2006, “What lies ahead is in God’s hands, and I know I am safe there.”

She **IS** safe in God’s hands. And, thanks to the out-pouring of your prayerful support over these past months, all of us at NRRO also experience that care and safety. I know, to a depth I have never known before, what it means to be held in prayer. I am deeply grateful to each of you, and I know that Brother Hank, Monica and Jean join me in this gratitude. You are gift to us. Thank you!

“You know what to do.” As we continue with the work of the NRRO, we pray that we will have the wisdom and strength to live up to Andrée’s confidence and trust. We also pray for the grace to know that what lies ahead is, indeed, in God’s hands and that we will be safe there. We count on your continued prayerful support.



Gratefully,
Sister Janice Bader, CPPS
Interim Director

From the Staff of NRRO. . .



Pictured above: back row, Jean Smith, Henry Sammon FMS; front row, Janice Bader CPPS, Monica Glover

Brother Henry Sammon, FMS, JCL

Associate Director

I first met Andrée during her initial employment with the Tri-Conference Retirement Office (TCRO). . . . I was happy to see a familiar face when Andrée returned to NRRO as Project Director of Retirement Services. It was then that I got to know Andrée and to realize she was a very caring and giving person. When she became Director, I was overjoyed because she was pleasant to work with and easy to talk to. Andrée had a knack of bringing out the best in people. She always encouraged the staff and thanked us for making her job easier.

When I experienced a personal tragedy earlier this year, Andrée was right there, caring, encouraging, supporting and understanding. Andrée was truly a virtuous woman, the epitome of how to live the life of a woman of God. Even though I miss her dearly; I know she has the ultimate reward – a life with Christ.

Monica Glover

Database Administrator

Sr. Andrée was many things to many people, but to me she was foremost a friend and a coworker, who just happened to be my boss.

Andrée was always kind, always supportive, and a joy to be around. She commanded respect – not by demanding it, but in her gentle ways.

It's hard to accept that her earthly presence is gone, I feel her presence strongly in the work we do and I miss her very much.

I feel so very honored to have been able to work for Andrée and with her. She was truly a wonderful person and a gentle spirit.

Jean Smith

Staff Assistant

She whom we love and lose is no longer where she was before. She is now wherever we are.

John of Chrysostom

From the Former Directors of the Tri-Conference Retirement Office and the National Religious Retirement Office. . .

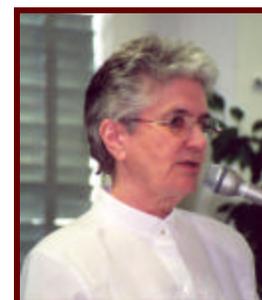


Sisters Mary Oliver (L) & Andrée (R)

There is no way that the help given by the TCRO/NRRO to the religious congregations... could have been as effective as it has been if it were not for the years of dedication that Sister Andrée gave to this ministry. Her leadership and skills were remarkable gifts that benefited thousands of women and men religious. . . . I was blessed in the early years of establishing the TCRO to have Sister Andrée as a coworker. Now, with all those whose lives she touched, I thank God for her remarkable live and pray that her staff may find comfort in her continuing intercession on their behalf!

Sister Mary Oliver Hudon, SSND
 Director of the TCRO, 1986 - 1992

Andrée Fries, CPPS, was a friend of many years, a wonderful, dedicated woman, who helped thousands in her various positions. Her expertise in finances was used generously with leaders, treasurers, planners and all who asked for help. Her manner never put people's questions off as too minor to consider. She was always gracious and looking out for the common good. In spite of the serious issues with which she dealt, she always had a welcome word for the stranger and an uplifting word for friend. I miss knowing Andree's helping hand and gracious personality is not longer with us, but her spirit will continue to inspire and help us.



Sister Janet Roesner, CSJ
 Director of the TCRO/NRRO, 1992-1997

. . . I saw Sister Andrée as a true sister to every religious woman and man that benefited from the Fund. She cared deeply, worked diligently, and planned strategically to make each contribution to the Retirement Fund matter in the daily life of each recipient. A woman of vision and insight, she had the ability to bring this vision to reality... focusing on bringing about systemic change in the operation of health care and financial systems of religious institutes. In this newsletter, Engaging Aging, I see a call to religious institutes to move beyond care for their senior members to providing a deeper and more enriching quality of living life. The creators of NRRO established a strong, yet flexible, organization empowered by vision, foresight and a strong spirit of cooperation. Sister Andrée built upon these principles and advanced their effectiveness in her sisterly service to our religious institutes. May she rest in peace.



Sister Mary Leahy, SP
 Director of NRRO, 1997-2000

The bustle in a house
 The morning after death
 Is the solemnest of industries
 Enacted upon earth.



The sweeping up the heart
 And putting love away
 We shall not want to use again
 Until eternity.

Emily Dickinson

From the Sponsoring Conferences of NRRO. . . Bishops. . .

...Sister Andrée was highly respected at our USCCB headquarters and her service to the Church has been and will continue to be a wonderful legacy.

...The breaking of any human circle demands a certain tribute of tears. When that circle is broken by the death of a dear Religious Sister then the tears become more plentiful and the pain more poignant. Andrée was a marvelous, marvelous woman.

...Andrée was a great woman of the Church... She had insight into the foibles of bishops, and I was blessed to be the beneficiary of the terrific sense of humor in this connection.



...We were in tune on so many issues, including that she picked up the tab for the taxi from the Bishops' meeting to the airport.

...Sister Andrée will always be remembered for her effective leadership and the outstanding service she provided to the NRRO.

...The Religious of the United States have lost a powerful advocate in Sister Andrée.

...Her tireless work on behalf of retired sisters throughout the United States was both effective and inspiring.

...Sister Andrée's ministry as Executive Director of the NRRO has touched the lives of so many of our men and women Religious, helping to substantially improve the quality of their years of retirement... Her zeal and commitment have laid a wonderful foundation.

...As we say in Byzantine Churches, "May her memory be eternal!"

...Although we saw one another only occasionally, it was always a pleasure to spend even a few minutes with her. Sister Andrée was a wonderful religious and a joyful, optimistic person with a great sense of humor.

She truly is a woman of God whose life has served the Catholic Community, the United States, and the Charism of her own religious community

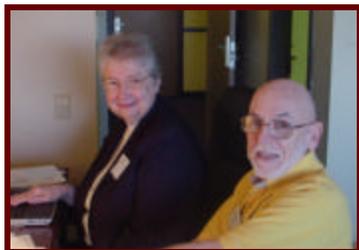
We rejoice in our hope of sharing
the Glory of God. Romans 5:2

...and Religious

...Andrée spoke with eloquence, simplicity, and integrity for the women religious of the United States. She was our proud advocate and our dear friend.



...We recognized her immediately as a true sister and friend... someone who was so genuinely concerned for our welfare and who did so much to help us as a time of real need; not only in terms of financial assistance, but guidance, understanding, moral support... Such a special charism, being able to reach out to all religious in such a sisterly, compassionate, non-judgmental way, just wanting to give help and to serve.



...Andrée was a down-to-earth woman who did her work with charm, wit and professionalism.

...Her contribution to the mission of the Church will be greatly missed.



...The Church has lost one of our outstanding leaders.

...I always found Andrée to be so approachable, so committed to the task at hand.

...Andrée graced our lives with vision, humor and determination.



Andrée's term as President of LCWR, 1994-1995

...I was touched by Sister's gentleness, simplicity, and her energy to assist Sisters in need.

*Lord, that I may grow
firmer
simpler,
quieter,
warmer.*

(This prayer hung on Andrée's office wall at NRRO and in her office while she was Superior General of her congregation.)

From friends and colleagues. . .

In the course of the many years that I have known Andrée both as a colleague in LCWR and in elected leadership, I have come to love and respect her commitment as a woman religious. She was a woman of passion deeply given over to a life of selfless service to her own community and to women and men of other religious communities.

Andrée's ability to empathetically enter into the most painful circumstances of others' lives bore evidence of the compassion that characterized her ministry. At the same time, her delightful sense of humor kept her intense devotion balanced and serene. Andrée had the



ability to tell a story that evoked laughter, but it was never at the expense of another. Her humor was a healing antidote for the often stressful and demanding challenges of her day by day encounters with human need. Andrée's personal friendship was a great gift in my life. I will treasure the memory of the years I have known her.

Sr. Bette Moslander, CSJ
Former President of LCWR,
1981-82

Editor's note: Andrée often referred to Bette as her mentor and friend.

The spirituality to Andrée which dedicated her life, the spirituality of the Precious Blood, is something she cherished. For her it meant that her inner spirit focused on Christ, on his Most Precious Blood, on its power to unite, to reconcile, and to heal. This spirituality, this fundamental stance toward life, is at the heart of Andrée Fries.

This spirituality had very practical consequences for Andrée. She believed that she was called to gather people together, to facilitate community, to build bridges, to reconcile those who were "afar." She believed that the Blood of Christ was powerful enough to bring opposites together, to bring peace in place of turmoil, and to heal even the most broken heart. . . Hers was a life of covenant and community and all her efforts were intended to reflect a far reaching inclusiveness. . . .

Over the past few years Andrée had a growing attachment to Saint Teresa of Jesus. Like Andrée, Teresa was common sense woman of the Church. . . .

Two key concepts from Teresa were special to Andrée. One is the recognition that humility is the foundation of the spiritual life and that in humility one is moved to gratitude, to recognize that "gifts have been given." Andrée was a humble person and a grateful person. Could she do it now, Andrée would want to say a word of thanks. . . thanks to each for the gifts given.

The other learning from Saint Teresa is another simple truth that comforted Andrée, especially as death drew near. St. Teresa writes, "O Lord, how you are the One True Friend." Andrée had come to appreciate this friend and she loved Teresa's definition of prayer: "It is nothing more than standing alone sometimes with the One whom we know loves us." Andrée was the kind of person who wanted friends to meet friends. She would urge you and me to get closer to this true Friend of hers today. In fact, she would see a great opportunity for us right now as we gather for this Eucharist. For our part, Andrée, dear, dear friend, we can only utter St. Teresa's words of encouragement back to you on your way: "Nada te turbe, nada te espante; Let nothing disturb you, dear friend, let nothing make you afraid, because she who has God, lacks for nothing, and God alone suffices." Thank you dear sister, and may flights of angels met you on your way.

Excerpts from the homily given by Rev. J. Cletus Kiley at the Mess celebrated July 18, 2007 at the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC.

She who has God, lacks for nothing. God alone suffices.

St. Teresa of Jesus

Poetry by Sister Andrée. . .

The Covenant

I call...

"I have chosen you."

Now...

"Leave" the security of the world's wisdom

"Come" to the land I will show you.

Learn...

That my name is LOVE

And your name is MINE

Know

I shall dwell with you forever

You shall live and move in ME

Fear Not

I have purchased you with a great price,

Everlastingly I will take you to myself.

Come!

Ad Sum

Here I am Lord...

Expectantly poised,

Gratefully overwhelmed

Tremendously poor,

Joyfully desiring...

Learning what reality is..

Not who I am, but whose I am,

Not what I do but

Your will be done.

Lord, I beg You,

By the power of your death and rising

May I live in YOU as YOU DO in me.

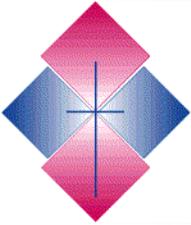
ADSUM! ALLELUIA!

From the editor's desk...

"All beginnings are hard, especially a beginning that you make by yourself. That is the hardest beginning of all." So wrote Chaim Potok in his novel, "In the Beginning." During the past few days, I have come to understand those words deeply. Yes, the time of grieving and sadness following Andrée's death has surely been hard. I miss her terribly, plain and simple. She believed in me when I couldn't, and welcomed me into circles I could not have entered without her. But just now, sitting at her computer, using her office temporarily to complete this memorial tribute, I think it is the process of starting up again that is even harder than grieving. I keep expecting to see her round the corner, to hear her laugh and see her little smile. Only silence comes. But because this is about Andrée, we DO start again. We get on with it and keep moving forward. It is the only thing she would have stood for. And so, Andrée, dear friend, we offer this for you, and promise now to get back to work. And you, may you be in God! You are always in my heart.

Sherryl A. White, CSJ





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The National Religious Retirement Office coordinates the national collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious and distributes these monies in grants to eligible religious institutes for their retirement needs.

The National Religious Retirement Office supports, educates and assists religious institutes in the U.S. to embrace their current retirement reality and to plan for the future.

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