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Expression Through Poetry

For one ALS patient, poetry provides a way to express feelings she cannot speak aloud anymore. Three years ago the inspiration to write poetry hit Sister Noel after meeting another nun who could not communicate.

"I wrote a poem called 'Nothingness and Aboundingness' to express my feelings that she possessed great inner joy and peace, although she seemed to be isolated and cut off from others," said Sister Noel. "I had never written poetry before."

A Philadelphia native who grew up the youngest of ten children, Sister Noel joined Maryknoll Sisters Congregation.

"Our mission is to make God's love visible in serving the poor and in working for peace and justice in our varied ministries in 29 countries around the globe," she said. "Maryknoll Sisters meet the needs of the people wherever they are."

She says that ALS has opened her up to a world of very caring community of PALS and doctors, social workers, physical therapists, and other staff at ALS clinics in Philadelphia and New York.

"They have been an inspiration and joy," she said. "I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Stephen Scelsa and to the dedicated Staff at the Beth Israel ALS Clinic and to all caregivers for their compassionate care and efforts to improve the quality of life for all PALS."

Sister Noel has used her poetry to express her experience with ALS.

"Much of my poetry has flowed from the experience of ALS," she said. "Being unable to speak inspired my poems 'The Wordsmith' and 'Blessings.'"



A Blessing

*Blessings come in surprising ways -
From Monday to Friday
A blessing arrives
Sandwiched between cereal and
bananas
Coffee and toast
Announcing its coming
By the rattling rumbling
Of the little red cart
Pulled by Sara of the sparkling eyes
And sprightly step.
With a happy smile, she stops at my
chair
We raise our thumbs in silent salute
Thumb touching thumb
Heart touching heart -
A wordless blessing.*

*Gladness flows in life giving streams
From thumb to thumb
From heart to heart.*

*What need of words
When thumb touches thumb
And heart touches heart*

In a touch of love.

The Wordsmith

*An ordinary, extraordinary pen
With stories to tell
Snub nosed, pointy
Cylindrically shaped
Words pour out like a water fall,
Translator of my alien tongue.*

*Ready at hand
To share the daily grind
Or the adventuresome climb.*

*Cascade and flow
Into rivers and streams
Of surprising thoughts, hopes
and dreams.*

*Sometimes blunt, sometimes
smooth
Whatever the message.
It gets to the point.*

*Sharing memories
Of long ago times,
Long dead friends
Come alive again.*

*Like a poet,
Revealing what lies beneath
The surface of things.*

*My pen is more than a friend -
A part of me,*

*My heart's voice
Gladsome, sad
Exclaiming, explaining,
Jesting and jousting.*

*Calling out to strangers and
friends,
"I'm here, I'm here -
I have something to say."*

However you and your family celebrate the Holiday Season, we at the Chapter would like to take this opportunity to wish our PALS and their loved ones, Joy, Peace & Happiness!