Mary Mardel, RSCJ (nickname: Be)

Born March 2, 1918 in Seattle, WA

My childhood and adolescence, spent chiefly in Los Altos, CA, were happy and blessed with loving parents and a delightful young brother. Growing up, because of asthma, I had to spend much time in bed and I developed a passion for reading and creating things with my hands. Being ill, I was always in and out of school, and the last two years of high school at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Menlo, were my first consecutive years in any school. They were significant years for it was there that I first heard the call to give my life to God, which I did in 1937, after two years at the San Francisco College for Women.

My mother’s heart suffered greatly in this “loss” of her only daughter but she never objected. When I told my father, he said, ”I have prayed for that since you were born.” And what a gift!

The first twenty-one years of my religious life were spent at 2222 Broadway, San Francisco, as teacher, surveillante and mistress general. WWII brought the heart-breaking death of my nineteen- year- old brother, and the next year I made my profession at Kenwood on July 31, 1945.

In 1961 I was sent to El Cajon to be superior. There I had the privilege of planning the new chapel for community, noviceship and school, as well as founding the St. Madeleine Sophie Center for mentally ill children. It is with enormous gratitude that I see the development of that ministry today, where four hundred mentall ill adults are loved and served.

I returned to Broadway in 1966 during the challenging years after Vatican II, where my role as superior evolved into that of Director of Schools. In 1972 I was named provincial of the Western Province – Seattle to San Diego. (We were five provinces until 1982). In 1978-79, I had a unforgettable sabbatical in England including three months in Israel on my own, one of the greatest graces of my life. Then I was asked to return to Broadway as Director and launch the school’s first capital campaign. After 1987, a ministry that I highly valued was my five years with an AIDS Support Group at Most Holy Redeemer Parish. Other cherished memories of those years are the seventeen years that I organized monthly hikes for the RSCJ in San Francisco and Menlo. What good times we had!

I moved to Oakwood in August 2004 to help Sr. Nancy Salisbury, who died suddenly two months later. My years at Oakwood since have been happy and blessed and after seventy-five years as an RSCJ, I see that Jesus has indeed *“saved the best wine until now.”*