

# **‘I have connections in heaven’**

Mercy Sister Lois Mueller was a bundle of energy when I first met her at The Villa retirement home in Baltimore three years ago. I was visiting for a story I was writing about how retired nuns kept in shape by playing bowling and other Nintendo Wii video games donated by students of St. Joseph School in Cockeysville.

After watching the 93-year-old Baltimore native smile and laugh as she smacked down virtual pins left and right, I posed a few questions for my story. Sister Lois graciously answered. Then, much to my surprise, she turned the tables on me.

“You’re such a nice young man,” the grinning nun asserted. “Are you married?” “No,” I replied with a smile.

“Would you like to be?”

Not quite sure where the good sister was going with her line of questioning, I turned a bit red as I acknowledged that I would love to be married someday. First, I said, I needed to find a girlfriend.

Sister Lois, a spry woman who wore a bright pink blouse and matching jacket, was supremely confident.

“Well,” she said with ease, “I have connections in heaven. I will pray for you. After you are married, you will have to come visit me with your wife.”

I laughed and thanked Sister Lois for her prayers and sentiments before returning to the office and promptly forgetting her pledge.

Approximately two weeks later, a hand-written letter appeared on my desk at the Catholic Review. It was from Sister Lois, outlining in two pages her prayer regimen for me. She would offer a whole series of Our Fathers and Hail Marys. She clearly meant business.

Sister Lois wasn’t the only holy woman I’ve met on this job who took it on herself to put in some good words for me up above. A year after my encounter with Sister Lois, I visited Mary Zimmerer at her Essex home. A widow who became one of just two

canonical hermits living in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Zimmerer took the religious name of Sister Maria Veronica of the Holy Face as she began her ministry. Without any prompting, she assured me of her prayers.

Not long after chatting with Sister Maria Veronica, I began dating Treasa Beyer, a parishioner of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland.

If you are a believer, you know where the story is going.

Four months ago, I knelt on one knee amid the cherry trees in Washington, D.C., and asked Treasa to marry me. Hand-in-hand, we prayed inside the Our Lady of Czestochowa chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception as one of the first acts of our engagement.

Treasa and I will marry this fall at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore. We will visit Sister Lois and Sister Maria Veronica soon after to thank them for their support.

Looking for a spouse? Ask for prayers. They work.

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