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Cor Unum Award

Associated Alumnae and Alumni of the Sacred Heart

Virginia Kratage Antakli

The life of Virginia Kratage Antakli – the things loved, and the ideals believed in begin in the attitudes of the heart of Jesus: care for the most vulnerable, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, integrity, leadership and most of all – love. There, in the heart of Jesus, her life radiates what she first learned in the Kratage home and in the home she found at Lawrence Avenue. The relationships with both the community of the Sacred Heart family and the Religious of the Sacred Heart shaped her commitment to spend her life in pursuit of the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Virginia's "classrooms" for both loving and learning have spanned nearly every relationship we celebrate in these days of connection and association. Virginia embodies the life of a woman of conscience, grounded in her own relationship with God and lived in her leadership as a Sacred Heart educator, Trustee, partner with her husband Nic in corporate leadership and commitment to their four children and grandchildren, and always held within the heart of Jesus.

Virginia Antkali keeps the "heart of the matter" and "matters of the heart" as her first priority. She places those she loves and the desire to leave a footprint of conscience commitment to others as the measure of her success. Fidelity to her vowed life of marriage integrated with her lifelong pledge of love for the mission of the Society is evident in the long list of her accomplishments, the measure of her desire to carry "Cor Unum" to the Middle East and to bridge relationships across some of the most turbulent places of divide.

But, today, we honor Virginia not only for the daring measure of the ways that she makes visible the Calls of Chapter 2016 in her desire to brave new frontiers in faith, courage, confidence and as a tender warrior of the heart. We, the Religious of the Sacred Heart, who have been shaped and formed by the love Virginia has had for us, the generosity of her care, her willingness to challenge us with her honesty and depth of heart, and her deep desire to walk with us as we make Sophie and Philippine's vision visible in our world today – we honor and thank, you, Virginia for being the instrument of God's love and action – with us, for us and among us.

"Whatever participation Virginia has in helping the others, it is really her deep spirituality that marks her life and relationships. She looks for the good in others, is slow to exclude or reject and seems undaunted by criticism or even lack of trust. She has had many challenges and seems to meet them with a gentle boldness. Now, she is one of the stakeholders in the tradition and stability of the Mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart in Michigan. I am so proud and grateful to know her as a colleague and friend."

Virginia Antakli, we honor you. We thank you. We treasure the gift that you are and the gift that God has so generously shared with us in you. May the love you have given inspire generations ahead to be brave and undaunted in the things loved, the things lived, the things loved, and the ideals believed in.

Thank you, Virginia for teaching us what it means to be Religious of the Sacred Heart. Thank you for being our friend, our companion on the journey – our sister.

Bridget Bearss, RSCJ & Meg Canty, RSCJ
New Orleans April 27, 2019