

A day in the life of Sister Caritas Strodthoff

“There ARE no typical days in my life!!” But I said I’d try so I thought I’d do what today has been like. Is it typical?? Not exactly but I’ll highlight what IS typical...everything else is “routine”.

6:00 AM The alarm rings and I roll over just 5 more minutes. Then I’d better move.

6:35 AM I’m on my way to chapel for Morning Prayer.

6:45 AM We begin with: “Oh, Lord open my lips”... “And I will proclaim your praise!” The day has begun.

7:05 AM Liturgy with one of three Chaplains that alternate saying Mass for us. We begin with a song welcoming a new day, a song at Communion remembering Jesus in Eucharist as the Body and Blood of our lives. And then the closing song blessing the coming day.

7:45 Am sort of: Breakfast together in our cafeteria. There’s a “come and Go table for those who need to get to work. Those of us who aren’t rushing quite as fast pray our blessing prayer together, eat and then pray our Thanksgiving prayer together...and we’re off to the coming day.

A typical day for me during the week:

After breakfast I head down to the Archives Office and check the temperature. It’s Fall so sometimes the room is a bit chilly and I need a space heater for a little while. Turn on the computer and check email first thing. Then it’s “work”. This week I’m working on typing up the information I want to use for The Founder’s Day Program I volunteered to do this year. Once I get started, there are phone calls: someone needs a statue for a display, someone has information on one of our deceased Sisters that they want to send to us. Yesterday I learned how to Power Point. Next week I’ll work at the presentation and photos.

11:30 AM. On a typical day I usually head for lunch between 11:30 and 12 noon. But today is not a typical day. We’re decorating chapel today for All Saints Day and I’m on the Environment Committee so I need to be there. Usually I pray from 12:30 – 1:30 PM everyday...but today I switch to 11:00 AM (and get a phone call just as I’m leaving so it’s more like 11:10), pray until 12:05 and then head for cafeteria to get lunch before they close at 12:10 AM. I enjoy a nice lunch with Sr. Elaine who is also on the Environment Committee. Takes us til about 1:30 to finish the decorating. Then I went out and picked flowers from the two large perennial picking gardens we have. Made 4 bouquets for chapel and by 2:30 PM I’m back to a typical day.

One of the Sisters has emailed me needing a picture of the Kerch Sisters for the Monthly Memo so I’ll go searching in their folders to find the photo. Then it’s back to The Founder’s Program. I’m almost done.

4:00 PM I’ve decided I need to get some walk time in and this works best. So between 4:00 and 4:5 PM I grab my book and I...walk!!

4:35 PM Time to head to Chapel for Evening Prayer. The gong rings at 4:40 PM reminding us it’s time to pray. 4:45 PM Prayer begins by the reading of the Necrology: the Sisters who have died in the past on the next day. The date they died, where they died, how old they were, and how many years they were professed are recognized for each Sister.

After the reading of the Necrology, we have a time of silence to review and reflect upon the past day: where did we meet God today, was I compassionate, did I do my best? A reflection is given for us to ponder. Then it’s time for Evening Praise. I am a volunteer for the Liturgy This means I’m periodically scheduled to lead the Office (Morning and evening

Prayer) for a week. Sometimes I'm the Lector...for Mass and for Prayer. I also take turns being Eucharistic Minister for a week or a Cup Minister when needed. But this week I'm just another Sister and I don't have anything to do but pray.

5:30 – 6:10 PM Time for supper whenever you want to come down and eat.

Friday evenings every week: 6:00 PM I'm scheduled for dishwasher...I work the "hot end" meaning I take the dishes out of their holders as they come out after being washed and put them on the carts where they go. By 6:30 – 6:45 PM we're done.

Typical evening for me: I usually have a project to work on, and if it involves using a computer, I watch whatever is on TV that's not a sitcom. Presently I'm working on putting all the genealogy information I've collected over the past 30 years into Family Tree Maker. I finished one family last evening and have three more family lines to go. If it were Spring and Summer, I'd be working out in the gardens in the evening until I can't see any more. I also do countcross stitch on Thursday night when we get together for Craft Night.

I typically work in front of the TV until 10:00 PM. Then I play one last game of Mahjong Titans, listen to the weather forecast for the next day/week, and then I head up to bed. That doesn't mean I GO to bed. I usually crawl in and then read. By 11:00 - 11:30 I turn out the light and I'm dead in bed until morning.

And that's a rather typical day. Of course, if you really want to downsize it:

6:00 Am Get up

6:45 AM Pray Morning Office followed by Mass and then breakfast

8:00 ish: to work whatever that might be.

11:30 – noon: Lunch

4:40 Gong rings for prayer.

4:45 PM Pray Evening Prayer

5:30 Supper

Bed....whenever.

Sometime during that 24 hour period, pray an hour.

First Sunday of the Month: Recollection Sunday: means it's a quiet morning. We eat breakfast in silence and then spend a quiet morning until lunch. Benediction in the afternoon at 3:00 PM