

Footwear to us is the finishing touch to our wardrobe as binding is a finishing touch to our quilts.

She wore the regulated black string tied soft soled nun shoes mandatory in the Ursuline Order wardrobe to make a statement that she chose to become a nun, a servant to God. Her petit figure was hidden beneath five yards of basic solid black serge. The white wimple surrounding her face and covering her chest was an added touch to her wardrobe. Huge pockets in her "Habit" hid numerous items confiscated from grade school idle hands, mostly boy's hands. Items like pea shooters, yo-yos, Lone Ranger silver metal guns were lost forever in those deep down caverns. A rosary cinched on her waistline belt signaled her otherwise sleuth walk as the beads prayfully played together innocently singing to us of their nearness.

All of the 52 third graders in the classroom at the neighborhood parochial school knew when Sister Mary Andre was standing next to us as we pretended to read the next chapter in the history book. Gossip filled notes, being passed back and forth among certain long haired beauties, seemed to stand still in mid air as Sister Andre glided up and down the aisle.

If Sister hadn't been bedecked in her Habit and had worn everyday western wear she would have looked like one of her students. One or two of the boys did tower over her by an inch or so. However one look from her wire rimmed eyes settled even the most daring smart alec in the room. And those three black hairs growing from her chinny chin chin added to the mystery of Sister Mary Andre and her power over the huge class of "Third Grade Angels".

But as time goes by the toys confiscated in those early days of yesteryear and the notes divulging secret secrets crumbled and deteriorated. We grew up. Most of us didn't think of our dear Sister during those many years of life and its long lasting teachings.

Sister Mary Andre grew, too. She grew out of teaching and into retirement. She grew out of retirement and into convalesce. She lost her memory of us all and gained a personality of defiance and a strong attitude. She no longer wore her Habit. Instead she wore a simple skirt and blouse and added a finishing touch to her wardrobe with Red High Top basketball shoes. She was a "Kick", a tiny, petite whirlwind in red shoes.

She was a colorful woman to the end adding the perfect touch of red to finish the quilt that was her life.

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