

*Sister Claire Marie McLevy, BVM (Clarene)*  
*Wake Stories/Reflections*  
*Marian Hall Chapel, Dec. 23, 2016*

**Sister Katherine Keating, BVM (St. Wilma)**

Sister Dorothy Gaffney, BVM and I would have Super Bowl parties at our place in Chicago. Sister Annamarie Kane, BVM, her friend, would bring Claire Marie and a couple of other sisters from Wright Hall. We always had a Super Bowl pool. Everybody did get a gift, but it was always one of those gifts that nobody wanted. They were wrapped and ready. Claire Marie said, "I don't want one of those gifts that nobody else wants. I'm going to win the pool." And she did; she won it at least three times. She was a fun person.

**Sister Donard Collins, BVM**

When Claire Marie left teaching in Kansas City, Mo., in 1986, it was decided that she didn't want to remain in Kansas City. It was up to this new greenhorn Regional to find a place for her to live until she could go to Wright Hall. Fortunately, very good BVMs and the charity of the congregation provided. Genevieve Kordick, BVM (Basilian) who was living in Des Moines, offered an extra room so Claire could stay there. Then I said, "I really want to find a place where she can volunteer."

JoAnn Baum, BVM (Joaquin), who was the director of the Willis Adult Day Care Unit, said, "She could come and volunteer four or five hours a day." The charity of the congregation was 100% plus! Claire Marie was very good with the adults. She really seemed to blossom. More than even the daycare, she appreciated that Gen Kordick had a cute little dog. That dog became the center of Claire Marie's life. Those few weeks that she was to stay with Gen turned out to be almost a whole year.

**Sister Mary Therese Pfeifer, BVM (Joselyn)**

I've known Claire Marie McLevy for 70 years. In 1945, when she was professed, she came to Kansas City on a home visit. That was the year I entered Mount Carmel. She was to be missioned in Chicago at Our Lady of the Angels. She wasn't there very long when the superior renamed her Clarabelle. It really fit her all through life. Everyone has their own personality. She had a lot of problems in life, but we were always able to take care of them. She loved to sing; she loved to dance. She went to California for a short time but then returned to Kansas City to St. Catherine and Sister Dolores McHugh, BVM had her. From there she came to Christ the King where I was.

She was a person who loved the community, loved her prayers, and loved Mother Clarke. She had a lot of friends among her classmates from St. Aloysius in Kansas City. She had an excellent education and had the BVMs in high school. She was well qualified to do anything that she wanted to do. When she was at Christ the King and would become ill, I would take her to my sister's house in Raytown, Mo., for three or four days of rest. Schatzie, my sister's dog, would always stay in Claire Marie's bedroom. She just loved that.

We had a Jesuit priest that came to visit us one night. He brought a bottle of champagne. We were going to have it a little later in the evening. We had a nice visit, but then Claire Marie said, "I'm going to go to the kitchen to open the bottle of champagne." Well, we waited and waited and waited. We said, "What's going on?" and decided to go to the kitchen. We saw her with the bottle of champagne pounding it on the floor trying to get it open. Well, it opened and it sprayed all the way up to the ceiling. It was raining champagne. We looked at Claire Marie holding the bottle and she said, "Well, we still have some of it in here."

Claire Marie was teaching third grade. After school every evening I would go to my room in the convent. The sisters would come in one by one and stop by for a nice talk. But Claire Marie always passed my door and went to her room. This one day the telephone rang in my bedroom; it was Claire Marie. I said, "Claire, where in the world are you?" She said, "I'm in the telephone booth right outside your door. That darn dog won't let me in your room." I didn't know why, but found out that one day while she was in the community room, our dog Taffy decided to get up on one of the divans. Claire Marie said to it, "You don't belong up here. Get off." The dog got off, looked at her, and walked out. So always be good to your little friends because they don't forget it. Claire Marie was the only one that Taffy would not let into my room.

Later when Claire Marie left teaching, Sister Donard Collins, BVM took her to Des Moines. We didn't have the superhighways of today. So we are traveling along on the two-lane highway when Claire Marie sees a Walmart. She said, "There are some things that I would like to have." She got a big cart and picked up her items. When she got up to the cashier, she turned around, looked at Donard and said, "Well, aren't you going to pay for it?"

Later when we were at Wright Hall together and it was time to come to Mount Carmel, she really didn't want to go because she wasn't a morning person and liked the afternoon Masses at Wright Hall. She was all right with the move after she learned there was an 11:15 a.m. Mass at Marian Hall so she could rest in the morning. Once here, Claire Marie would ask for things and Sister Mary Angele Lutgen, BVM, coordinator of support services at Mount Carmel, would bring what she requested. But it was often not the right size or the right color, etc. It was always something, but Angele was always so patient.

When she was going to celebrate her diamond jubilee, it took almost everything that Angele had to fit her into something satisfactory. I told Angele, "Don't worry about her. We'll have her all put together." I went to her room and found a beautiful suit that she had bought in Kansas City years ago hanging on the door. I said, "Claire, this would be a beautiful outfit for you." She agreed but said, "Will you find a belt for me?" But there were no belts. She said, "What if it's too big for me?" I said, "We'll just use a big safety pin to keep it up." She put the skirt on and it fit her perfectly. She still needed a blouse so I took one out of her closet, but it had a different sister's name in it and that sister is still here. I said, "This belong to another sister." She said, "No, it's mine. I've had it for years." Well, she put it on, looked in the mirror and loved it." After the ceremony, I told her that I was going to take the outfit and give it to Angele to put in the closet for Claire Marie's funeral. She said, "My funeral!" I explained how all of us are asked to do that so she let me take it. She's wearing the outfit today.

I was her letter writer for five years. Last year when it was time to do her Christmas cards, she told me that she didn't have the printed labels so I had to write the addresses. Sister Frances Ann Schaeffer, BVM (Louis) came in and helped me. Claire insisted on putting a little greeting and her name on each card. Two days later she still hadn't started the task and it was almost Christmas. We took the cards, tied them together with a red ribbon and she was to put them in her trunk for this year. Well, she couldn't find them this year. However, last Sunday, she came over in a wheelchair and brought me some different cards. Sister Diane Rapozo, BVM (Malia) came on Monday. We addressed all the envelopes, Diane wrote a greeting and I signed Claire's name. At one o'clock in the morning, everything was sealed. On Tuesday morning, her cards went into the mail. At 10:30 a.m., she passed away. She always got what she wanted. This was the way she wanted to go and I am grateful that God was so wonderful to her.

**Sister Brigid Mary Hart, BVM**

Claire Marie remembers me from my Scholasticate days and student teaching. Sister Theresa Marie Gleeson, BVM (Dorothy) and I were assigned to Our Lady of the Angels in Chicago for the winter semester after the fire. We were in a brand new school. I don't know if Claire Marie wanted me to be more like I was back in those days, but she would always remind me that she knew me from then.

There were forty sisters in the convent. We came in on Monday morning, taught, stayed a few nights and went home on Friday evening. So I don't really remember the sisters at OLA. But there was something about that twinkle in Claire Marie's eye. She always wanted to know where we were going and wanted to go too. I talked with Sister Annamarie Kane, BVM who really wished to be here. She was a faithful companion not only on trips to the doctor but to go out for a meal. So many times Claire Marie being there with that delightful twinkle and smile, enjoying the party or celebration. We'll miss you, Claire Marie. Thank you for remembering.

**Sister Karen Conover, BVM**

I followed Sister Mary Angele Lutgen, BVM in the job and can confirm that Claire Marie had definite opinions of what she liked and didn't like. This morning I received an e-mail from Sister Patricia Taylor, BVM (Wilbur) who lives on third floor. She told me that frequently she, Sister Eugena Sullivan, BVM and Claire Marie would have a pizza supper in one of their rooms. Last night they had pizza and it was the first time that Claire Marie was not physically present. She said in her e-mail that it was like saying goodbye. I know I speak for the sisters who lived around her in blessing Claire Marie on her way home to God and saying that she will be missed in those simple things.