

Sister Therese Mary Waughon, BVM (John Francine)
Wake Stories/Reflections
Marian Hall Chapel, March 21, 2017

Sister Jeroma Day, BVM

I first met Therese at Wright Hall in 1981. What I was impressed with about Therese was her faithful commitment and dedication to teaching at St. Gertrude. She walked there every day—good weather, bad weather, whatever. I was touched by that dedication. Since she has been here at Mount Carmel, and especially now since I have been living here, I have visited her many times and shared in those sing-a-longs on fourth floor. It is true, even though she might not have held the book, turned the pages, and her eyes were closed, she always sang along. You knew she was enjoying it, most often tapping her foot. I will always treasure her beautiful smile every time I announced myself to her. I am grateful for the gift of experiencing the beauty of Therese. I know now that she will continue to intercede for all of us and especially for our congregation during these important, significant days.

Sister Anne Buckley, BVM (St. Edwin)

I met Therese many years ago but didn't spend a lot of time with her until she came here. Therese was quite serious and very challenged when she was on fourth floor, but she did participate. I could never start the hymn at the end of prayers, but she would always volunteer, which was a wonderful thing. When we had games and she was able to participate, she always would even though it was difficult for her. Thanks, Therese.

Sister Catherine Jean Hayen, BVM

I first met Therese in 1965 when I did my student teaching at St. Dorothy in Chicago. She was teaching in the sixth grade at that school. I lived during the week at the convent as a scholastic. My experience of her then as now was as a quiet person who always had a loving smile. As has been mentioned, when she came to Marian Hall, she listened voraciously to audio books as her sight was failing. She loved music, especially operas like *Cats*, *Les Miserables*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. She also appreciated the sharing of BVM news and BVM caring and love. A special love for her were horses. She befriended a horse of Amy Shireman, of the activities staff, and was delighted to be able to name the horse Santana. I now rejoice that she is in the arms of her loving God.

Sister Catherine Dominick, BVM (Michael Ann)

On Saturday when we still lived in Chicago, Therese and I would go to work where I used to work to get the files in order. There was not enough time during the five-day work week, so on Saturday morning I would drive us and we would work for about five hours. After work, the two of us would go out to lunch together and have a good time. Thanks, Therese, for all your help.

Sister Kathryn Lawlor, BVM (John Laurian)

I was in the novitiate with Therese; we were in the same set. Our paths never really crossed after the novitiate, but I want to tell what I witnessed during ministry of presence with Therese. Those nurses and aides were so darling with Therese that I was in tears for the whole hour. They were kind and comforting. They told precious little stories about her. She was not an easy patient, but their stories were absolutely darling. One of the nurses, whose duty was over, stayed on with Therese because she knew the nurse replacing her had two floors for which she was responsible. They were hugging her and kissing her and telling her it was OK to go. As I said, I was in tears. I just want you all to know how blessed we are with the nurses and aides who care for us. We are so fortunate to have these women caring for us.

Sister Mary A. Healey, BVM (Michael Edward)

I think of Therese as welcome. She was a year ahead of me in high school; we knew each other casually. She entered the BVMs a year before. The first time we postulants gathered with novices, Therese welcomed me as if I were her oldest, dearest friend. She remained warm until she was professed and left. A year later, I was professed and sent to Grayslake, Ill. A few weeks later, we were invited to Round Lake, Ill., where Therese was teaching. Again, I got a great welcome. That spring we saw each other often because our superiors liked to get together in the park, and her superior like to organize baseball games. Therese and I used to hide in the bushes so we wouldn't have to play; both of us wore thick glasses and were afraid of breaking them.

The first summer I attended summer school at Mundelein College—after about 10 years of matriculating at Mundelein while taking classes in three other places—Therese, who had been going there all along, gave me another big welcome—but not as big as the one in midsummer when I was changed to Fort Dodge, where she lived. When I arrived, she showed me where things were, how to work the copier, and how to check out 40 children's books at a time from the public library for my classroom. That was a big deal for her; she read all those books. Therese loved children's literature and knew a lot about it. When she earned her master of arts degree in religious education from Mundelein, her project was based on children's literature.

The next time I remember her was in Holy Week of 1968. I was spending a semester of study in D.C. when Dr. King was murdered on Wednesday and the city went up in smoke. The university closed. There was a 4 p.m. curfew. We could see smoke and hear gunshots. Saturday I phoned our convent in Bellerose and asked S.M. Ann Clancy if I could come for a while. Early Palm Sunday morning when the rioters were tired, I took a city bus past the burnt buildings and the tanks at street corners to the Greyhound station, rode to New York, and took a subway to Bellerose. I'd forgotten Therese was there, but she was waiting with open arms.

On Monday, the sisters there had school, but I was at liberty in New York and decided to see the city. On Holy Thursday, school was closed and Therese proposed to go along because church services weren't until evening. After the museum, we walked over to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. On our way out, I spotted a note about the parish library on a bulletin board. As we entered, a collie came to meet us. I stopped to pet the dog while Therese kept going. Suddenly I heard her squeal; I looked up and saw Therese go around the desk and embrace the librarian. It was her favorite author, Madeleine L'Engle, who lived in the parish and volunteered at the library. I continued to commune with the dog while they talked about Madeleine's books which I believe Therese had memorized. At closing time, they exchanged phone numbers and addresses. Madeleine and the dog, Oliver, walked us to the subway stop and kissed both of us good-by. She and Therese did correspond. Therese visited Madeleine while still in New York. When Therese returned to Chicago, Madeleine used to teach a course each summer at Mundelein, so they were back in contact then.

In 1987, I went to work and live at Wright Hall where Therese had lived for years and taught at St. Gertrude. When she welcomed me, Therese said, "I've told everyone our story." I didn't know what "our story" was, but she explained it was meeting Madeleine.