

Sister Kathleen Doherty, BVM (Patrick Louis)
Wake Stories/Reflections
Marian Hall Chapel, Feb. 14, 2017

Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM

I would like to begin with a second hand memory. I thought how appropriate that a phone rang because someone told me this morning that you might receive a phone call from Katie at 6 o'clock in the morning, if she knew that you were an early riser, looking for information to put in the newsletter. If she knew you were a night owl, she might call at midnight to ask you to do something. She was a wonderful outreach person and the phone was one of her great tools. It's probably good it honored her this morning.

Father Bob Thesing, SJ, Former Pastor of Holy Family Parish, Chicago (Email read by Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM)

Katie was such a hardworking, loyal person at Holy Family and a good friend to so many of us. I remember her St. Patrick's Day parties in her apartment above the bar on the west side. A good time was had by all! My prayers are with the BVMs and all the friends of Katie. All the best, Bob.

Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM

We received three short emails, each beginning with the thought, "May Sister Kathleen rest in peace." Dorothy Amato, a St. Mary alum, added, "She was the most gracious nun I ever met." Rose Carter Milani, a former BVM, added, "She is in our Lord's arms now." Louise Tomasino Rizzo from the St. Mary Class of 1971 said something I'm sure we can all agree with. "Sister Kathleen, your smile could light up a room."

Sister Mary Martens, BVM

Between 1968 in the fall and 1973 in the spring, I taught in Chicago, at what became the St. Mary Center for Learning after its many years and long history as St. Mary HS. Those were not easy years as the transition occurred between the high school and the Center for Learning.

The thing that I remember most about Katie, and it was said so well in the prayer read a few moments ago, was that she was a gracious, kind and witnessing woman. She accepted the transition, which was a real transformation for the school, and she moved with it. It was not easy.

Looking back, I was still young enough to get really excited about the possibility of teaching at St. Mary and being one of the first people in that early transition. Katie taught something that we would all recognize as English I or Freshmen English or English 9, depending on how it was named in a traditional school. When it became St. Mary Center for Learning, English had a title like "Creative Reaction to Environment" and "Film Study," which is what Katie taught.

Always, whether it was the St. Mary HS alumnae or learning center alumnae, she had the same love for, interest in, and devotion to the students. She was equally loved by both; we had quite a diverse group when the change occurred. She was wonderful to live with; I lived in the

convent for a couple or three years before moving to the north side of Chicago, close to Mundelein. The emails that were shared were certainly true of her throughout. She would make the long drive to Waterloo periodically to visit her mother. She was a gracious lady, a wonderful person, a giving person in the convent, and a giving person to all the students.

Sister Nancy McCarthy, BVM (Josephine Mary)

Katie came into my life in 1984 after St. Mary's. When I moved to Holy Family in Chicago, Katie was teaching on the first floor of the building where we lived, teaching everything from ESL to typing and shorthand. I would stop in and see her after school every night and we became friends. We shared a love of teaching, music, and all things Irish.

After a few years, Katie one day suggested to me that perhaps I would like to replace her if she ever retired. Well, I was still teaching deaf students in a grade school fulltime. I didn't think that was for me, at least not right then. But she did plant the seed in my mind and my heart. After I retired, I did start working with adults and I still do today.

Katie loved to talk and I loved to listen. After 30 years, I had learned quite a bit. The thing that stays with me the most is how important each individual was to her. I never knew anybody who had so many contacts with whom she kept up. Every person was so special, never just a name on a list or in an address book. I hope that is a lesson I can keep with me today.

Mary Frances (Brown) Casserly, Cousin

I had two older brothers, but always wanted a sister. I think God sent Kathleen to be my sister, but He waited a long time. Although our family has a long history, we didn't really connect until I was married and had five children of my own. My dad and Kathleen's father Patrick and his brother Tom worked together on a farm in Ramelton, Ireland, when they were young school boys in the late 1890s. My father eventually made his way to Chicago and Kathleen's father and uncle to Waterloo.

Kathleen and I were first generation Americans. When I was about twelve, my father and I took the train to visit Patrick and Mary in Waterloo. We also stopped at Mount Carmel in Dubuque to visit Kathleen who was a novice at that time. That was the first time that I met her. When Kathleen was teaching at St. Mary in Chicago, she had a three-day seminar at St. Xavier, which is close to our house on the south side, so we had Kathleen for dinner. That's when our friendship really blossomed. After that, she was my sister. She has shared family holidays and other happy occasion with us. Kathleen had a marvelous career teaching.

All of us enjoyed hearing about Kathleen's film days at St. Mary. She had to go to the public library to pick up films to show at school. She would show the films to our family over the weekend. She was a tremendous influence on our lives. We appreciated her personally and her introducing us to her life, her friendships, and her family. It's been a very a happy relationship. I couldn't even add to everything that has been said about how gracious and loving she was through the years.

Ginny Koster Kock, Cousin

I am Sister Kathleen's first cousin once removed. My mother Mary Salz Koster is also with us today. Sister was an only child so she always said her cousins were her brothers and sisters. There are gobs of pictures of her and her cousins doing activities together as they were growing up. Mom remembers organizing Monopoly and Sorry! games in the afternoon. She was one of the older cousins so she was the "teacher" getting everyone organized.

In later years, when Sister would come back to Waterloo to visit, she liked to visit my parents on the farm. Mom remembers one time when the violets were in bloom. Sister really enjoyed picking them and making a bouquet. Sister was very good at keeping track of all her cousins. She also kept track of all the cousins in my generation, and my daughter's and my daughter's children. Family was very important to her. She said the blessing at the meal when my oldest daughter got married.

When I was a teenager, I visited Sister in Chicago and then flew back home; it was my first plane ride. When I was there, I remember going swimming in Lake Michigan with Mary Casserly and her family and going to Marshall Fields. I wasn't used to big department stores. She would begin at the bargain basement where we had hot dogs. She always knew where to get a bargain. When I was in college, I and two of my friends drove to Chicago and stayed with Sister in her apartment above the bar. She took us to an Irish pub and we went down to see the Christmas window displays at Marshall Fields.

After I got married, my husband Greg and I would go to Chicago. We would visit his cousin and we would visit Sister; they lived on opposite ends of Western Ave. She used to take us down to lower Wacker and show us restaurants where the Tribune reporters used to hang out. She also took us to Chinatown. We were always relieved when we got back to her car to find the hubcaps still on the car, because she was still living in that apartment above the bar. We were always a little bit worried.

When my family, including my mom and dad, visited here at Mount Carmel, she would like to go out to eat so we took her to the old Star Brewery. This was a restaurant in the old brewery downtown, but I think it's closed now. Anyway, Sister wanted dessert so she ordered this piece of cake. The waitress said that it was an awfully big piece, but she ordered it anyway. We all laughed when this four by six inch piece of cake came and Sister ended up sharing it with us. She took an active interest in all our lives. She encouraged and prayed for us. We hope that she enjoys her time in heaven.

Jolene Van Eschen, Cousin

My mother Dolores is a first cousin to Kathleen. I am the youngest one so I don't remember Sister much in my younger years, but from later coming here to visit. We would usually take her to the Olive Garden; she loved the breadsticks. She and my sister Peggy would go over the genealogy; they were both madly in love with the genealogy of the family. Most of our time here was spent talking about that. My mom would tell me that when I was younger and Sister came to visit, I would embarrass my mom by saying, "Does she ever stop talking?" That's the

only thing I remember from my younger days. Otherwise, I always enjoyed my visits here and talking with her. It is a beautiful place here. I was so glad she was able to move closer to us so we could visit.

Kathleen Mossman, Cousin

I was named after Sister Kathleen. I actually lived in Chicago when she was there. She was downtown and I was in Elk Grove Village. I had a newborn and, unfortunately, Sister had shingles at the time. We could only talk on the phone, which is great because Sister did like to talk on the phone. We spent a lot of time on the phone until she was able to have us visit.

When we could finally visit, another cousin and I took her out to lunch. The first thing she did was order a martini. Deb and I looked at each other and shook our heads. We got the biggest kick out of that. I picked her up quite a bit so she wouldn't have to drive to Elk Grove Village, but she did have a car. I'm surprised to hear she had hubcaps, because she told me that she never had hubcaps in Chicago.

I have a lot of good memories of her. I remember when she still wore the habit; she was beautiful. Then, all of a sudden, she came in normal clothes. We couldn't quite figure that out, but it was OK. She looked really good then too. God bless her. I am fortunate to be named after her.

Sister Theresa Gleeson, BVM

The last place where I was assigned was Holy Family and that was in 1967. There's not much I can add to what others have said as far as who and what Kathleen was, except that we never called it a bar, we called it a tavern. She lived on the third or fourth floor; it was very high.

After she left St. Mary, she came to Holy Family and was the secretary at the parish. It was a Jesuit parish at the time and they absolutely loved her, as most people did. I would go with her to visit her mom and we would go down to the Casserlys.

Wherever she would go, she asked if I would go with her. One time she asked if I would go with her to Ireland, to Ramelton in County Donegal to the house where her dad was born which was still standing. We did go and met her dad's cousin Lily who showed us around. It was the most wonderful experience. We went again sometime after Lily died and had another experience of getting to know people because of knowing Lily.

Keeping in correspondence was Kathleen's gift. It seems that she was in correspondence with everyone she ever met. She has been a friend all through the years to those who knew her and loved her. I just feel so privileged to have been part of Kathleen's life and to have been her friend.

Sister Helen Maher Garvey, BVM (Robert Joseph)

There was a life for Kathleen before Chicago and that life was in New York. I remember as a young person what a wonderful music teacher she was. She had a portable organ and the

eighth grade boys would carry it wherever she went. She evoked singing from the most resentful young men who didn't want to sing. She had that kind of personality. We started practicing for the May crowning sometime in February, and we would be singing all the traditional Marian hymns. It was always a tremendous occasion whether it was a graduation or a May crowning or whatever. The music was always outstanding. I was surprised that she didn't pursue music more in her later life because she was so very good at it. I have a letter from a friend of hers to read.

Arline (Krajnik) Schroeder (Read by Sister Helen Maher Garvey, BVM)

I met Sister Kathleen in 1948 at Our Lady of Loretto School in Hempstead, N.Y. She was my piano teacher. Sister Kathleen and I remained friends throughout the years. She visited my home and watched my family grow. We had many telephone conversations as we both aged. We maintained contact through our Christmas greetings. Through Sister Kathleen's encouragement and her always positive attitude toward developing my gifts for the piano and organ, I played the organ in churches for more than 35 years. Sister Kathleen was a compassionate, joyful, loving presence in my life. May she rest in peace.

Sister Mary Jo Keane, BVM (Martin Mary)

Kathleen has been my pray-er forever. She talked a lot, as we all know. One day before she moved here, she called me and she read me all the instructions to get into Marian Hall. There were pages and pages and pages. After she came here, she seemed happy. She was still praying for me, so I would send her little bits of candy. Eventually the person who would give her the candy had to point my picture out in the photo directory and tell her my place in her life.

Sister Mary Alma Sullivan, BVM (Robert Emmett)

My recollection is a little different from most that I have heard. In the early 1960s, the motion picture came to be regarded as an art form in Europe. I was very interested in that and did a little experimenting. I realized that there were a lot of people in the city who might be interested in incorporating the cinema into their classes. I knew Kathleen was interested and asked her to join with me to organize a group of teachers in Chicago interested in the cinema. Well, we did. I have to say she was very creative and she was very organized. Those two things don't often go together.

We called this organization the Screen Educators Society. It was the first in the country. There were about 75 active members from the greater Chicago area, all high school and college teachers. When it became more than we anticipated and because changes were happening at St. Mary where Kathleen was involved and I was busy, we asked a young man who was one of the earliest members of the Screen Educators Society, a boys' high school teacher in Chicago, if he would chair and organize it. That organization later moved to New York and it is now international. Kathleen brought a lot of creativity and organization to its beginnings.

Eileen O'Shea, BVM Associate, St. Mary Alum

I didn't know Kathleen at St. Mary HS when I was student, but I got to know her about 16 years ago when she pulled me aside at the centennial luncheon for the St. Mary Alumnae Association.

She said, "Eileen, you have to be on my alumni board. I need some younger people." Well, I wasn't going anywhere where I was a younger person at that point. The next thing I knew, I was the president of the alumni association.

Kathleen had a way of pulling us in and keeping us glued together. On Saturday, the St. Mary Alumnae Board held our biannual meeting. I looked around the room and thought, "Kathleen, I've got your younger people. The president of the board graduated in 1972. We have board members from the late 1960s and 1970s. She got her wish." So, Kathleen, we're keeping it on.

BVM Associate Kay Ann Derner Brown (Read by BVM Associate Sharon Scully)

When I became a BVM associate in 2002, I did not know I had a cousin who was a BVM on my paternal grandmother's side of the family. In 2003, I was asked to become a part of the Associate Coordinating Committee. The first meeting I attended was at Wright Hall in Chicago. A couple days after I returned to Oklahoma, Will and Mary Ann Salz came and stayed with me as we were working on our genealogy together. I told him about Chicago, and the associate program. He then asked me if I knew I had a cousin who was a BVM. Since I didn't, Will filled me in on Katie.

The next time I visited Wright Hall, Katie and I met and we became friends immediately. We kept in touch by phone. It was always amazing to me that we could talk for an hour and Katie always had something new to talk about. Finally, after she moved to Mount Carmel, there was one time when Will and Mary Ann and I could be in Dubuque at the same time. We stayed at Mount Carmel and went out to eat with Katie. The four of us had a wonderful time together.

As Katie's memory started to fail, she was well aware of it and hated it. Our phone conversations became shorter. The last time we spoke she had called me to thank me for a gift I had not sent, and the conversation was less than five minutes. I knew that would most likely be our last conversation, and it was. She was a great woman and will be missed.

Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM

Barb Tadin, a 1956 graduate of St. Mary and a board member from 1994-2015, sent several pages of reflections about her time with Katie. What I will share with you is her summary at the end, which I think summarizes the last half hour quite nicely.

Barb Tadin, St. Mary's Alum (Read by Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM)

I am struck by themes, which I have seen so evident in Kathleen's life and ministry: her love of history and education and St. Mary's and the BVMs; her gratitude for the generosity of those who loved the BVMs; her indefatigable work on behalf of all those she loved and was grateful to or grateful for; and her inspiring others to continue working on behalf of those beliefs.

Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM

Finally, I share a piece of music that came to me from Katie's room. The title is, "If I Can Help Somebody." In her handwriting at the bottom, it says, "Save this music! Keep forever. Kathleen Doherty, BVM from John Behruns." This is the text of what she wants us to keep forever:

If I can help somebody as I pass along,
If I can cheer somebody with a word or song,
If I can show somebody that they are trav'ling wrong,
Then my living shall not be in vain.

If I can do my duty as someone good ought,
If I can bring back beauty to a world unwrought,
If I can spread love's message that the Master taught,
Then my living shall not be in vain.