

*Sister Mary LaStant, BVM (Adorine)*  
*Wake Stories/Reflections*  
*Marian Hall Chapel, Nov. 9, 2015*

**Sister Carol Marie Baum, BVM**

I came to know Mary when I came to Mount Carmel to minister. I can't help but think that I will be reading this "Wise Counsel" reflection several times again because it has certainly captured the beauty, the gift and the willingness of sharing a radiant God with many people. The first thing I remember about Mary is her absolutely beautiful smile that never left her. She always greeted you with that great smile. Another is that she was known on the Motherhouse side as "the hugger." I think it also carried over to when she was living here in Marian Hall. It didn't have to be someone she knew. She was willing to give that hug and she made you feel very loved and welcomed. It was that great hug that warmed every single person that she met. Another was her willingness to always make sure she had a joke or two or three or four to share at the table. If she didn't, she would seek out people who had jokes in their repertoire that she could take and use when she was visiting at the table. Thank you, Mary, for the gift of your smile, the gift of your hug and the gift of your jokes.

**Sister Therese Jacobs, BVM**

I met Mary on a long journey from San Francisco to Kauai, Hawaii. We were very young, very energetic and very excited about flying over the ocean—a nine-hour trip. We didn't know each other, but after nine hours, we had the opportunity to get caught up on the first five years of our religious life. Mary was the kindergarten teacher at Holy Cross and I was the music teacher who got to teach in both schools. Mary was wonderful with children. The children would know every word of what we were preparing to sing and were as docile and loving as you could imagine. Another thing I love about Mary was that on occasion we would go to the beach. It was a wonderful delight to go swimming and enjoy the beauty of the sunshine and the sand. She had such a simple, gentle way of being there. I remember sitting with her often, not having to say much, but simply enjoying the beauty of the surroundings. Mary, I'm always grateful for having known you. I knew you here again and enjoyed that radiant smile.

**Sister Peggy Devereux, BVM**

I am always grateful to have had Mary at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Chattanooga, Tenn. She was a marvelous teacher, very, very creative, and the children loved her.

**Sister Carolyn Farrell, BVM**

I was principal at St. Patrick in Dubuque for five years, 1969 into the 1970s, and Mary was part of that five-year experience. She was a terrific teacher; she taught fifth and sixth grades. She always talked about meeting individual needs; that was our goal. She was able to work with the gifted and the not-so-gifted, the well-behaved and the not-so-well behaved. She was able to do that with care and love. No one from her room ever came to the principal's office. She was in charge in the best sense of the word. A student of hers is here today also. We were talking earlier and she had the same impression of Mary as I did.

**Sister Mary Agnes O'Connor, BVM**

Many of us here at Mount Carmel know our BVM Associate Marilyn Heinz. Unfortunately, Marilyn could not be here today to share this story so I will do my best to share for her. She mentioned that her daughter Julie loved having Mary for sixth grade. She said she was an excellent teacher. She was strict, but because of her excellent teaching, Julie decided right then and there that she wanted to be a teacher. When Julie went to high school, she worked here at Mount Carmel as a nursing assistant, and going on to college, she decided to pursue a nursing degree. Still, to this day, Julie believes that Mary was the best teacher she ever had. Marilyn also mentioned that they had Sister Davidis Devine in seventh grade and many of us do remember our Davidis.

**Maria Kruser, Former Student**

Sister Mary was my sixth grade teacher. I will never forget her. She was the best teacher I ever had. We all had numbers; my number was 22. I use it all the time as my lucky number. It hasn't brought me much luck, but it makes me so happy to use it. She was so understanding that it's unbelievable. She was so compassionate, so nice. I will never forget her. May you rest in peace, Sister.

**Sister Eileen Healy, BVM**

This jumps from Mary's teaching to when she was here at Mount Carmel. I always considered her the patron saint of companions. She would be out a couple of times a day and developed a great rapport with the drivers. Again, she had a line of jokes she told and considered it her mission to relax the sister on her way to the doctor's appointment. That was the point of all her jokes. One time I said to her, "Your jokes are really corny, Mary. Why are you telling them?" And they really were. She said, "Well, the sisters laugh and it relaxes them." As a companion, she is what I would like to be now that I serve in this ministry. I really appreciate Mary's effort in relaxing the sisters.

**Brenda Lucas, Niece**

I remember Mary giving my mom and dad a week off when we were kids. She would come and take care of us. We always had some kind of travel like going up to the park on a bus. I know that she wanted to be back up in heaven with my mom and her mom. I think that she is in a very good place right now.

**Sister Ann Daniel O'Neill, BVM**

The first line of the "Wise Counsel" reading "to live content with small means" was so typical of Mary. She often talked about how little she needed. She never seemed to be asking for things. She was a very spiritual woman.

**Sister Mary Alma Sullivan, BVM**

Sadly for me, I didn't know Mary until about a month ago when I happened to be staying on Marian Hall South and had meals with the sisters who ate up there. Mary was just across from me. I want to say that it became clear to me by watching her, just watching her eyes, that she was already somewhere else waiting. Frankly, as sad as it is for those she leaves behind, I think Mary must have been happy as a clam that she was called.

**Sister Kathleen O'Sullivan, BVM**

I taught with Mary on Kauai. My memory of her isn't that clear. I don't remember her telling jokes, but I do remember her as a loving, calm presence in the house. That was a blessing.

**Sister Donard Collins, BVM**

The thing that I recall about Mary when she was at the Motherhouse was that she was a companion, like Eileen said, but she was also a personal shopper. On Saturdays she was usually gone early in the morning, took the bus, stopped and ate lunch somewhere, usually Bishop's, returned early in the afternoon with all these bags, various bags, candy, whatever it might be, for the other sisters. I said to her at one time, "Mary, you do know that we have a bus ticket that you could use instead of using your own money." She said no, but came back about two weeks later and said, "I think I'm going to take advantage of that bus ticket. I can go more than once a week."

**Sister Therese Jacobs, BVM**

I want to say one more word about Mary. Kathleen mentioned her presence in her house. I remember one time sitting by the ocean and talking about how everyone we knew was thousands of miles away. We had gotten to know the sisters with whom we lived and they were such a gift. I asked Mary, "What is really important to you?" She said, "Making the sisters happy, bringing joy into their lives." Now she was about 27. Wasn't she wise to know that living in community was all about bringing joy and peace and love to the sisters?

**Sister Carolyn Farrell, BVM**

When I heard about Mary's death, it was a real surprise. Sometimes we know that people are really ill or fading away, but I didn't know that about Mary. The next thing I heard was that she was going to have a natural burial. I thought, *Mary, a natural burial?* It gave me great pause. But then I knew, and the line "to live content with small means" from "Wise Counsel" captures it, Mary was very simple. She didn't need a lot of stuff. Mary thought, *Natural burial makes sense. I don't need a lot of stuff.*

**Sister Carol Frances Jegen, BVM**

In these last few weeks of her life, Mary couldn't say much, but she never stopped smiling. No matter what time of the day it was, if you went to her room, she couldn't say much, but she could smile. I will always remember how beautiful it was.

**Sister Mary Crimmin, BVM**

I came to know Mary later in her life when I came back to Mount Carmel. I never knew her when words were her main means of communication. We have heard so often about her smile. If Mary and I were coming down the hall from opposite ends, she looked like she was going to walk her walker right into me. We both kept coming and when we got close enough we simply touched foreheads. Don't ask me why. But then she would smile and giggle. I will always be grateful for the remembrance of that smile and giggle.