

Sister Margaret (Ann Elise) Marso, BVM
Wake Stories/Reflections
Marian Hall Chapel, Dec. 12, 2013

Sister Laurian McDonald, BVM

I just have to say this on behalf of Bernice Marso. She's going to have to live a very straight and wonderful life in heaven now with Margaret there. She often used to say with her big black eyes snapping, "I am my father and she is my mother." All I can do without too many words this morning is to express my tremendously deep, faithful gratitude to God that the two sisters are now together.

Sister Mary Agnes O'Connor, BVM

What I am going to share may sound somewhat provincial. I know and knew five women who attended St. Philip School in Pasadena, St. Andrew High School taught by Holy Name sisters, and I lived with Sister Mary of the Angels (Killian), the first BVM to enter from southern California. She died in the mid-1960s of a brain tumor. I lived with Sister Margaret in Montrose, Calif. I lived with Bernice, her sister, at St. Robert Bellarmine in Burbank. I lived with Patty Boyd in Granada Hills. I guess I am the fifth one from Pasadena. We're even more connected; my parents knew Margaret's parents. My mother loved to visit her father's nursery in Pasadena. Not too long ago, Margaret told me that later on her dad was a terrific gardener for very wealthy families in San Marino, Calif., which is just south of Pasadena. My life was touched by four other BVMs. I couldn't help but share that with you. As far as Margaret, I think the readings so far have spoken so deeply about her, especially the responsorial psalm and the writing by Caryll Houselander. Those of you who planned her liturgy certainly have picked up the spirit that exists.

Sister Dolores McHugh, BVM

I first met Margaret in 1947 when our family moved to Arizona and we were in St. Matthew Parish. My three younger siblings were in grade school there. We were about eight or nine months in Phoenix, when my sister, who was 21, died at the birth of her first child. It was the days of save the child, not the mother.

The sisters at St. Matthew were so good to the family and not just at the wake and funeral. I'll never forget that they were very present; looking out for us all the time I was there. Because of those visits, I am here today. I was so impressed with the hospitality and care of the sisters who lived there with my family. My brother Frank, who is younger than I, was in about third grade when Margaret had him in school. Margaret, every time I went up to see her, would say, "Do you know about St. Matthew's?" I would say, "Yes." And she would say, "Do you know what happened to your brother?" I'd say, "No." "Well, his pants got torn and St. Eleanor (Flynn) was in her office fixing them for him." It's a true story and she remembered that.

Anytime I visited her, and I am privileged to be one of the last people to see her on Saturday, I said this prayer that I always say. "May the angels lead you into paradise. May the martyrs come to welcome you. And you know, Margaret, God is just waiting for you to arrive." Two hours later, she was on her journey to heaven.

Anna Marie Bartlett, Daughter of St. Philip Classmate

My relationship with Sister was via my mother who was a classmate of Sister's from St. Philip. They knew Patty Boyd and Sister Bernice. We would always do things together. Margaret has been part of our family since I was born in 1951. It's been some 62 years!

I wrote some notes I would like to share about that class. Two priests came out of that class and one nun and of course Bernice, who was a couple years older than the class of 1940. One of the priests was Father Dick Wozniak. I don't know if any of you are familiar with the Wozniak name. Steve Wozniak, his nephew, was one of the co-founders of Apple Computers. That was quite a class. We and my granddaughters, Sister Bernice, Sister Margaret and my mother would go grave hopping. We would go to the cemeteries in the area and visit all family members and bring flowers on certain occasions. My daughters have very fond memories of Bernice and Margaret and all their comedy routines in the back seat of the car; Margaret was the straight woman and Bernice was always the cut up. They offered a lot of comedy relief for our family.

She's been like another mother to me since I was an only child. It's been very special having her as part of my family and my daughter's family, my grandchildren. We came here three or four years ago to visit Sister and just had a wonderful time. I think she remembered it. I do live in California, so I wasn't able to visit her as much as I would have liked. I made sure to send her little remembrances. She always loved to go to the Dodger games in Los Angeles. She went to the music center. People were always very generous with gifts that allowed her to go to special occasions. I think my parents took her down to my dad's sailboat in Dana Point and took her out into the ocean on a number of occasions. We took her under our wing and had a wonderful time with her.

The last couple of weeks, I felt very strongly how she was doing. I was getting some kind of a message from above that said her time was near, and it was much to my surprise. I did call and was able to get some information. I got the call on Sunday that indeed she had passed and then I knew why I was feeling the way I was feeling.

I guess God was letting me know so I was able to change my flight plans that I originally had, to somewhere else, at no cost. Usually they charge you a bundle of money, but the woman at the other end said, "Under the circumstances, we are not going to charge you." I'm sure Sister Margaret most definitely paved the way. Also when I went through security at the airport, I was put through a special line where the pilots and flight attendants go. I'm no special person; I passed 300 people and went to the front of the line. I didn't ask any questions; I just kept walking. I also had two bags to check and usually they charge \$25 per bag, but they were both free. Again, I didn't ask any questions and just went on my way.

There have been a whole lot of wonderful, powerful things that have happened to enable me to be here to join all of you in sharing Sister's life. What a wonderful community of sisters and staff that is here! It's a wonderful place; I'm glad I'm here.

Sister Julie O'Neill, BVM

It's so ironic that Margaret's services should be on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe because so many years of her ministries were with Hispanic people, particularly in east Los Angeles. The date was chosen very specially.

I got to know Margaret best when she was living as a resident on the memory impaired floor. When she first went up there, she became the self-appointed teacher of the group; she continued her teaching profession. When she went in their chapel room, she always walked all the way to the front pew, which most Catholics don't do. She wanted everyone in the chapel to respond, but most on the floor are past that ability. So when she would say a response, she would turn around and glare at people who had not responded. That got some people quite upset so much so that one stopped going into the chapel for Mass.

She was ever the teacher. On Friday night sing-alongs we would just finish, let's say, the song on page 16 and she would say, "Page 17!" so that everybody would be ready for the next page. If the people who were, shall I say, unlucky enough to be on either side of her did not turn to the right page, she would reach over and start pointing. Sometimes we had to intervene. Her life as a teacher just kept going and going. I can just picture her running around for eternity trying to change things.

Sister Catherine Jean Hayen, BVM

I think that many of you know that Margaret was very proud of her Luxembourg heritage. She and I shared that as it is my heritage. She loved the opportunity she had to see the exhibit at the Five Flags and also to go to St. Donatus. Now she is enjoying her Luxembourg heritage perhaps with some of my ancestors.

Sister Virginia McCaffrey, BVM

I lived with Margaret. One very extraordinary thing about her eighth grade class was they continued to gather every year. It was a joy to be with them because they had so much fun just getting together even when they had done it for sixty years. I think that was the last reunion before we left Pasadena. Whenever we would go out with Margaret, there was always somebody that she knew. It was just the most surprising thing. Of course, she spent her life there so it is understandable that there would be many who knew her. She did such great work in the parish where she was assigned.

Sister Mary Angela Buser, BVM

I remember the first day a little over five years ago that I visited Margaret on fourth floor. As soon as I said my name, she responded, "Oh, I know you! I came to St. Thomas the Apostle in West Hempstead when I was in summer school. All of you were so hospitable." I was amazed that she remembered that. I had to admit that I didn't recall the visit. She could tell me all the details about what we did when she visited. She was so grateful for it. For several years, she would always recognize me, especially if I said my name. She might not recognize my face, but if I said my name she knew who it was. I'm grateful that she renewed that experience for me.

Sister Mary Lou Larkin, BVM

My religious name was Sister Mary Mark. Every time I would see Margaret, she would say, "Well, hark the lark, Mark!" She didn't forget that. She said, "Remember, you helped open Holy

Redeemer in Montrose, but I helped close.” I thought, “How true. I never even thought of that before.” I remember her with great joy.