

Sister Sarah Ann Braig, BVM
Wake Stories/Reflections
Marian Hall Chapel, Feb. 5, 2016

Jackie Tigges, High School Friend (email read by Kathleen Danz, Pastoral Services)

I have thought a lot about how I would remember Sarah other than her love of people and how she loved to talk to everyone, her beautiful singing voice and how she would just begin to sing, that she loved to eat, loved baseball and her sitcoms. I guess I will remember most that Sarah lived in profound simplicity. Now I have a friend in heaven.

Barbara DePue, Friend (email read by Kathleen Danz, Pastoral Services)

When I think of Sarah, I see her smile first. I hear her laughter and her beautiful voice. And I also remember her recent struggle to adapt to the changes in her life—it wasn't her first choice to be back at Mount Carmel just then but she accepted it with grace. I remember her stories of taking care of elderly sisters—how she enjoyed playing games or singing with them to get them to do their physical therapy, etc. I can imagine her gentle kindness in these situations. I remember one year when we gathered in Milwaukee, her love of baseball was so strong she preferred listening to the game and singing along with the music to spending time visiting. I also remember Sarah's gratitude for even the smallest kindness done for her. I like to think she is looking after all of us and when we gather again, she will be with us in spirit. I will miss Sarah, her gentle kindness and acceptance of others. I was blessed to call her "friend."

Joan Hammel Brown (email read by Kathleen Danz, Pastoral Services)

I was privileged to know Sarah and be called her friend. It is difficult to put my memories of Sarah into words. Sarah was a loving, caring friend, full of joy when helping others. Her enthusiasm for baseball, especially the Cardinals, was so delightful to observe! She so loved her family as well. I think words that describe Sarah can be found in the Bible: "Love is patient, kind, bears all things, hopes, endures and rejoices!" She embodied all of these and now is rejoicing with our God! Rest in God's Peace, Sarah!

Sister Dolores Kramer, BVM

I have very fond memories of Sarah, but the fondest one is when I was about 40 years old and Sarah was just getting ready for final vows. We were at the Cenacle in Warrenville, Ill., making a 30-day Ignatian retreat. This retreat was very challenging in its depth and deep spirituality; it was just hard. I found it very challenging and I marveled that someone so young was taking this on. We both enjoyed and loved it and hopefully grew from it. Sarah continued to grow in grace and beauty and goodness.

Sister Donna Day, SL

Sarah would often come to the home that Mary Nolan and I shared. We would watch baseball together. Sarah was a great fan and had the t-shirts to prove it. She would even make us stand with our hands over our hearts during the national anthem. So today it would only seem fitting to honor Sarah by singing one of her favorite songs. Those of us from St. Louis will probably sing Cardinals, but I understand there are some Chicago people here who might change that to Cubs. Sarah will take either. So join me. (Sister Donna leads the singing of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game.") I think Sarah just hit a home run.

Sister Agnes Marie (Dee Dee) Keena, BVM (Read by Sister Colleen McGinnity, BVM)

Although Sarah and I lived in St. Louis, we did not get together except for cluster meetings and special occasions. Our ministries were such that our ties were not compatible with getting together. At the present moment, that seems like a weak reason for not connecting.

However, allow me to share one conversation I had with Sarah that broke open her beauty to me in her ministry. The story I tell is only a small part of her ministry, but a very transformative part. One day I asked her, "What exactly do you do?" This was when she was working at Jesuit Hall on the campus of St. Louis University. Sarah explained to me that she worked many night shifts to free up those employees who had families. During those hours she would attend to the priests and their needs. The priests were in many stages of health, primarily very sick.

As she was present to them, she told me that she would sing. They began asking her if she knew a particular song and she would sit by the bed and sing to them. Many priests found her songs added notes of comfort and peace and they fell asleep. One night, when she wasn't on duty, a nurse called her at home. She asked Sarah if she would come. Sarah told me that she was rather surprised with the call, but then the nurse added, "Father wants you to come to sing to him. Father is dying." Sarah told me that she was there and he was conscious and asked her to sing. Sarah stayed with him at his bedside and sang and prayed until early morning when the Lord called him home.

When Sue Rink called me and told me of Sarah's death, I thought of her special ministry of singing. I do hope that Sarah heard the voices of those many Jesuits singing to her as she entered that bright and inner kingdom to her eternal sacred stillness. I thank Sarah for acting justly, lovingly and tenderly and always walking humbly with God, and doing it with a song in her heart.

Tom Braig, Brother

I met many of you this morning and I asked you about your lives. Your lives are inspirational. I know much about you because for years I've received your wonderful publication *SALT*. I read it from cover to cover. It's my spiritual reading and it's my inspirational reading. You don't read *SALT* without realizing that Mount Carmel has been the powerhouse of spirituality for generations. Sarah wanted to give her life to God by becoming a BVM and God accepted her. More than that, you accepted her. For that, I am eternally grateful.

Sister Ann Pace, CSJ

Sarah and I met in 1987 when we started a program at Emmaus in St. Louis. Our friendship has lasted all these years. I called Sarah during the last World Series. I said, "Do you have the TV on the Cardinals?" She said, "Ann, I'm in Dubuque." In other words, you here weren't too interested, but she kept her loyalty.

Sarah and I would get together almost every weekend and play Cribbage. She hated to lose. If she lost, she'd say, "We have to play another. I have to play until I win." We were there a long time some days, but it was always fun and then we would go out for dinner. When her father came to town, he told me to call him Wayne, which I did. Sarah said, "Come on, Dad, we are going to go out for dinner." We went to Houlihan's where Sarah and I went frequently. We would get the early

bird dinner which included a beverage and a dessert, but we would split it because we couldn't eat a whole one. When we were going to do the same thing with her dad there, he said, "Sarah, I can afford to feed both of you." She said, "Dad, we can't eat that much." When the bill came he looked at it and said, "Sarah, that can't be enough for what we had to eat." She said, "Well, Dad, that's it." It was always fun to be with Sarah. I'll miss her.

Amy Lindstrom, Niece

I'm Jim's daughter. I don't really remember the early years of my life, but I do know Sarah loved children. It was always really apparent when we would get together with my children. Sarah loved to have a kid on her lap or a baby in her arms. It was her gentle, childlike spirit that drew the children to her and her to the children. She always sang to the kids. I know how much Sarah really loved those early lives and those lives near the end. She was a beautiful woman who shared her gifts with all of us.

Sister Mary Nolan, BVM

Sarah had a circle of BVM friends in St. Louis and we often did many things together. Our final act for sweet Sarah was when she was on the road back to Mount Carmel. She left behind her apartment which was on the 10th floor of Heritage House. My friends and I spent a few good hours going through Sarah's things and trying to make order. It was difficult because we had to use the elevator many times. We got to know a lot of people at Heritage House who loved sweet Sarah and they got to know us. The last day when we were finishing and turning in her key, one of the maintenance men came by and said, "You sisters surely must love Sister Sarah."

Sister Karen Conover, BVM

I am one of Sarah's set members. In the year that we entered, 1965, we entered in two places so Sarah was always the other half. Because she had finished at Clarke before entering while most of the rest of us needed more education before we were ready to go out, I never lived with Sarah.

In fact, only during these last five months when I've been here working at Mount Carmel did I have any real significant interaction with Sarah. We all know that she loved red because of the Cardinals and because she looked beautiful in red. A few weeks ago, one of her red sweaters needed a little attention—a seam was coming out. I took it home and was able to fix it and brought it back to her. She was so pleased. A few days before she went to the hospital, she had on that red sweater and came by my office. She just was beaming. She so loved it and was so grateful for the little thing that I had done that enabled her to wear her red sweater again. I think that's emblematic of Sarah—grateful for the little things and a smile of gratitude for anything someone did for her.

Sister Teri Hadro, BVM

I am in the same set as Sarah; part of Karen's other half. When we were in the novitiate in 1965, *The Little Prince* was the book that we all were making great meaning of. There is a phrase where the fox says to the Little Prince, "What is essential is invisible to the eye." I think Sarah had that principle through every cell of her being.

One of Sarah's duties in the novitiate was the sewing room. The sewing room was directed by a sister who knew how things ought to be and would let you know, so most of us did not have very many good things to say about that sister. But Sarah would remind us that behind the role she was

playing that sister was a person with feelings. She would help us see that perhaps that sister was more than what appeared to the eye. For that quality I will always remember Sarah and thank her for it.

Sister Diane Forster, BVM

I don't think that anyone has mentioned that Sarah was a teacher for a while. She was in Antioch, but we can't quite figure out if she taught any of my cousins or siblings. I do remember clearly that my parents really did enjoy knowing Sarah while she was there at St. Peter.