

Sister Maxine Marie Rummelhart, BVM (Rupert)
Wake Stories/Reflections
Marian Hall Chapel, May 3, 2016

Sister Anne Buckley, BVM

Maxine would come up to Caritas 4th floor in her later days and always try to participate in every way that she could. Although she couldn't talk, she was very present. And more than that, when I would go around Mount Carmel and see the pictures, I would always be reminded of her because she had so many works of art on the walls. While she couldn't speak with her voice, she could speak to us by being present.

Sister Kathryn Lawlor, BVM

I want to speak about working in the Neighbors Program in Rogers Park around Wright Hall in Chicago with Maxine. The Neighbors Program was developed to care for those who lived in the neighborhood of both Edgewater and Rogers Park who lived alone and had no one.

Maxine was absolutely amazing to work with. First of all, she rode her bicycle through Rogers Park and Edgewater and found women, principally, who had no one. She went in and took over their lives. She would shop for them, tell them what they should be eating, taking care of their health, what medications they should be taking. Maxine was marvelous in helping those elderly women who had no one. Their apartments were often not too inviting, but she never hesitated to clean up what should be cleaned up, to throw away what should be thrown away. They loved her because they depended upon her.

There are many, many stories that came out of her work. The one I particularly remember was about this elderly woman who seemed to have no one. Maxine would come home after visiting her and say, "Oh, the mice in that apartment! I've got to do something about that." Well, I don't know if she ever did something about the mice because I never inquired into that part of her work. But I do know that when this woman who had no one that we knew of died, we made arrangements for her to be buried at St. Gertrude Church. The pastor at that time was marvelous; whatever we said, he did. We had the funeral for her and buried her in the local Catholic cemetery. Later on we got a call and this person said, "Why was she buried from St. Gertrude? She's Jewish." Well, we all make it to heaven in one way or another, don't we?

Another wonderful story that actually brought me to tears was about an elderly woman with a blind daughter. They were both very helpless, but the blind daughter was able to go out to the local store. Unfortunately, she was often mugged on her way home. Maxine took over that couple. We looked into different ways that might restore the daughter's eyesight, but were unable to do that.

Eventually, the mother died and the daughter was all alone in the apartment. We made calls and calls to find a place where she could still have a good life. I remember when the sister at Addolorata Villa called back and said they would take this daughter. I burst into tears because we had been trying so hard to find a place for her to go and we thought she had nothing. However, Maxine went to clean out the daughter's apartment and get her ready to go to Addolorata Villa. Maxine pulled a suitcase down from the top shelf of a closet and found \$6,000 in cash. So we sent the daughter to Addolorata Villa with a bank account of \$6,000. Those are just short stories about what Maxine did as she bicycled through those neighborhoods watching out for those women who had nothing.

Sister Mary Anne Bradish, BVM

Maxine was my prayer partner for about 25 years. I was in Bakersfield, Calif., and it was wonderful to get a four-page letter from her in her wonderful Palmer handwriting. One time she told me that she went to the bus station with her suitcase. She saw people there with cardboard boxes wrapped in string for their suitcases. She said, "We have extra suitcases. I need to get their names and take care of them." In the process, she wrote to me and said, "They need clothes. They need food. They need . . ." And so I became her ministry partner as well as her prayer partner.

I was thrilled about that. One other story about Maxine, I was a rookie first grade teacher in the late 1950s. She was a professional first grade teacher teaching at St. Brendan ES in Los Angeles and I was in Santa Anna. I would go to find some of the expertise that she had because I was very klutzy trying to do crowd control with 76 first graders.

Claire Morton and her mother Ann Morton, Friends

My grandmother, my mom and I worked together to write this collaboration. Unfortunately, my grandmother, Mert Feyee, was unable to make it today. Sister Maxine entered my grandmother's life over 20 years ago. At that time, my grandmother was a physical therapist at Mount Carmel. Maxine appeared at her office door on a referral and asked, "What is your name?" My grandmother replied, "Marilyn Feye, but everybody calls me Mert, except for my own mother." Maxine immediately replied, "Marilyn is a beautiful name and that is what I will call you." That was the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

Sister Maxine became a part of our family and was included in all our family holiday celebrations and birthdays. She especially enjoyed going over to the country club for her own birthday celebration. I believe Maxine would have been 90 this June. Several years ago, we went on a trip to San Diego. Maxine had a sister there whom she had not seen for many years. She asked if we would take her along and, of course, we did. I can still see her walking up the long steps to her sister's house. She was nervous, but excited. She returned to Dubuque on her own after a long visit.

Maxine was ready to help at a moment's notice. When my great grandmother, my grandma's mother, was in her final days at Stonehill Care Center, my grandfather Bill would pick up Maxine at the Motherhouse and take her to Stonehill so that my grandmother Mert could continue to work. My grandmother would return to Stonehill at the end of the day to find Maxine rubbing my great grandmother's legs and praying with her. That went on for two to three weeks until my great grandmother went to God. My great grandmother did not want to die, but Maxine made her journey in those last days easier. For that, my grandmother could not thank her enough.

As for my family, Maxine was our guardian angel. She was always there whenever my sisters or I were ill and on Saturday nights when my parents would go out to dinner. From my perspective and that of my two younger sisters, Maxine was always great. She somehow knew how to keep us under control, but still we would have tons of fun with her. I fondly remember playing numerous games of hide-n-seek in the house and taking off all the couch and chair cushions and throwing them on the living room floor and then jumping from cushion to cushion and chair to chair. She would just watch us in delight and some horror because she knew we had to put them all back. We spent many Saturdays with Maxine at the Motherhouse. We would go into her tomato garden and run around in the gym in the barn out back.

As a proud Clarke University graduate, I recall the lecture in my BVM heritage class about how important the service of teaching and education is to the BVM community. I remember sitting there thinking about

all the time Maxine spent teaching us new things. Specifically, Maxine taught me how to tell time and she taught my youngest sister, Carolyn, how to read at the age of four which was pretty amazing.

The last time my grandmother visited Maxine, she would not open her eyes or speak. She knew her journey would be ending soon. About a month ago, I had the opportunity to help care for her while she was in the hospital. She could open her eyes and was definitely her feisty self. I would sit by her bedside and talk about all the memories we shared. I could tell she was at peace listening to me. Even though she could not speak, I could see it in her eyes that she knew who I was. Of all the years that she cared for me, I am thankful for the last moment I spent caring for her. I will forever look at the guardian angel picture hanging above the stairs in my parent's house and think of Sister Maxine.

Sister Mary Angela Buser, BVM

I have a couple of memories of Maxine. When I was at Holy Family in Chicago, it was the home base for Sister Ann Credidio and we packed many, many duffle bags with things Annie was taking back to Ecuador. Some were clothes from the Mall in the Hall. This one day she had this huge pile of very small plastic plates. I looked at it and thought she must have gotten a great bargain at the dollar store. I said, "Where did you get these?" Annie said, "Oh, Maxine gathers all of the party plastics and washes them. She saves them and always has a good pile for me when I come." That's one of the many side things she did before we started recycling here and stopped using those plastic plates.

One day about six years ago when Maxine was still living on third floor Motherhouse, we were having a conversation at the dinner table. She wasn't entering into it very much. Then the question of when Caritas was built arose and we all had different ideas. Maxine said, "Well, just look at the needlework over on the wall. The needlework tells the day we had the first dinner in Caritas." It was her needlework. It's not there right now, but it has been from time to time. So when it reappears, take a look at it and you'll know when the first dinner was served in Caritas. It's a beautiful piece of art.

Sister Paulette Skiba, BVM

Maxine was one of the first BVMs that I met because as a freshman at Mundelein, I worked in the Neighbors Program. I remember that little bike. There's a picture of that bike. It's a bike like I had when I was twelve; it was a very small bike that she was riding around on. When Saskia Alquina and Alegría Chungana were in the novitiate here, especially Alegría who had very little English, they loved Maxine. Alegría was a seamstress so they had a lot in common. During that year, they both learned needlepoint which was a very good thing for Saskia who went to Ghana the next year and found herself teaching embroidery. She got a lot of materials from Maxine.

Sister Carol Marie Baum, BVM

I came to know Maxine in the late 1990s when she was living in the Motherhouse. Her talents are legend to say the least. She loved to cook. She loved to garden. She worked with several different media of art. I happened to be one of the blessed ones to have a beautiful floral apron that she made. I also have a table runner of wild flowers. The one that I love the most, although it did come with a price tag while the others were free, is a needlepoint of two bluebirds in a wildflower field perched on an old birdhouse. It hangs in my bedroom.

Maxine was also one who thoroughly enjoyed a party and would do all that she could to make sure it was festive. She was very gifted no matter what area of art, card making, or decorations. She was definitely a fantastic primary teacher. During her time in the Motherhouse she befriended an Amish

family. Every week she made sure that the car was loaded with food, clothing and bedding for that family. She was very, very good to them.

Sister Karen Conover, BVM

I came late August and did not know Maxine at all, but I would like to add something to what Carol Marie said about this Amish family. Her trunk will go to that Amish family at her wishes and with clearance from the people who need to say yes to that. Even in her passing away she was thinking of someone else.

Sister Joan Stritesky, BVM

I think I still have a lot of energy and had even more 10 years ago, but I think Maxine exhausted every bit of mine. She said that she wanted to go to the top floor in the Roberta Kuhn Center. She had some articles there that she was going to dispose of but they were favorites of hers. She asked me if I would like to go and help her. Of course I said yes.

It was the hottest day that God made that summer. She went up the stairs with me after her for the first time. She showed me some of the things she was giving away but were precious, like parts of frames, pictures that were started, pottery that she found and some that she worked on. She said, "Take them down little by little because we have a lot." So I made about four trips going up to that hot attic of the Roberta Kuhn Center. I held onto the railing to get up the last time. By the time I got up there she was looking about as cool as a cucumber. I looked at her and she said, "Just one more trip." We both carried things down in our arms.

We had taken it all down and it was the same pile that had been upstairs. She said, "You can go now. I can do the rest." I said, "How are you going to carry it?" She said, "Little by little I'll take it to my room." I saw her room one time. I think I saw the same things that she had taken down to give away. She was always thinking of someone else. God love her.

Sister Jane Haslwanter, BVM

Yesterday I received a message from Carla Feye in Colorado. She told me the story of Maxine and her children. Carla had two beautiful daughters and Maxine would like to take them and play cards with them. She taught them how to play Spades. On my part, I came here in 2008 and Maxine asked me to take her to the store. We went to Shopko and bought pots and pans for this wonderful Amish family. Another time we bought a set of dishes for them. She dearly loved these people and they certainly loved her.