



Wake Stories of Sister Clarenita Froehlich, BVM
Caritas Studio, June 23, 2020

Angie Loberg, friend

The song we just listened to [“Hail Mary: Gentle Woman”] embodies what Sister Clarenita was and is to me. She was a woman that taught so much about wisdom and love. She was that peaceful spirit in everyone’s lives. She had the gentlest heart. The phrase “gentle mother” is exactly what she was to me. She was like a second mom to me. She came into my life my second year of teaching and became one of the most inspiring mentors in my educational career. She was on the journey with me as I was engaged and married and had my two babies, who are now in their twenties. She was alongside me for my highest of highs and my lowest of lows. One story really stands out to me. Shortly after my mom passed away—my mom died on Thanksgiving morning—on the feast of St. Nicholas, I received a bouquet of flowers from the sisters (Sisters Clarenita Froehlich and Rosemunda Besch). My mom was always giving. Every year on the feast of St. Nicholas we would receive gifts from our mom. It is a tradition that we carry on with our children. So it would have been the first year that I was not going to receive something. But I still did receive something that year. It touched my heart. I don’t even know that she knows. We were a really tightknit group at St. Michael’s and I think we still are. We had a theme: Companions on the Journey. The theme has rung out loud and clear for so many years. The journey through so many highs and lows, and Sister played an instrumental part in that. Both of the sisters, Rosemunda and Clarenita, were people you could go to as a mentor. I think about the fun times we had. They hosted various Christmas parties. Even after I moved to Omaha, I was still invited to those. There was going to Bob’s Drive-in for their birthday celebrations and having ice cream afterwards. We have truly been a blessed group of people to have known Sister Clarenita. I think the bond is a unique one and that uniqueness is also a true blessing. I hope that she knows how much she meant to me and to my family. She will be truly missed.

Carol Marie Baum, BVM

I came to know Clarenita when I was regional representative. Clarenita and Rosemunda were living in Sioux City, Iowa, at the time. Hospitality with these two ladies was their hallmark. The many ways they would support the parish and outreach to the homebound is to be long remembered by the many people whose lives they touched so generously in the days living in Siouxland. I remember calling them when a resident, Carmel Boyle, from Mercy Park in Des Moines, moved to a care facility in Sioux City. She was a retired teacher and I asked if they would pay her a visit from time to time. Their kindness was a joy for Carmel when they visited. I was blessed to reconnect when they moved to Mount Carmel. During their time here, I companioned them for several doctor appointments for Clarenita. Clarenita never was one to want attention drawn to herself and was always making the best of some trying days as health became more of an issue. Clarenita, know you are loved and certainly not forgotten by me for your kindness, your lighthearted way of meeting the challenges life gave you, and your trust that God was and is in your corner.

Noreen Higgins Masterson

Sister Clarenita and I met 72 years ago when I was a freshmen at Holy Family High School in Glendale, Calif. We kept in touch by letter writing and phone calls after she moved away. Our long-distance connection meant a lot to me as we shared our teaching experiences. During high school, Sister Clarenita strongly demonstrated her dedication to spreading God’s love, which continued defining her life as a BVM sister. She truly has earned

her heavenly reward. As the Irish blessing goes, "May God hold you in the palm of his hand until we meet again." Love and prayers!

Holy Family Class of 1952 (Mary Lou Smith Ward, Noreen Higgins Masterson, Virginia Bierman Fitzsimons, Beth Henry Jones, Mary Hall Hirst, Mary Fornelli Hunt, Marilyn Higgs Linder, Ann Marie Gardes Herrman, Ruth Goebal Wilson, Jeanne Maine Balstad, Nancy Kraemer Hasse, Genevieve Sargent Collopy, Sister Dorothea Snaer OP)

We, the classmates of Sister Clarenita from the Class of 1952, Holy Family High School, Glendale Calif., extend our sincere sympathy and condolences to the BVM Community on the death of Sister Clarenita Froehlich. We remember her with fond regard and are inspired by her life of dedication and service to God. Now her work on Earth is done. We know that her life and her trust in Him was reflected in the good that she did as she accomplished God's will and that she now rests in His peace.

Mary Lou Fvette, friend

I've known Sister Clarenita since I was about 11 years old. She taught CCD at our little parish church, Cristo Rey in Los Angeles. My sister Linda and Claire would spend Saturdays at LA General Hospital visiting patients, asking if they wanted to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist the next day. They were students at Holy Family High School at the time. Her parents were family friends and very kind to us. Years later we enjoyed a visit from her along with my sister Linda when we lived in Northern California. It was such a treat to see her and we enjoyed a wonderful time with her. We took her to see *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. What fun! She is home now! Alleluia.

Pam Willis, colleague, St. Michael's, Sioux City, Iowa

I met Sister Clarenita when she and Sister Rosemunda came to St. Michael's Parish to begin working in our school. What a team they were! The atmosphere at school changed in a positive way and you could feel it when you walked in the door. I worked at the school for several years while Sister Clarenita was principal. She was always kind and gentle, but firm if need be, and we all loved her. We celebrated both Sister Clarenita and Sister Rosemunda's birthdays every year. The sisters had us at their house for Christmas party potlucks and we had fun with whatever games they had ready for us. At school, Sister often told us that we were companions on the journey, one of her favorite songs. We were "gifted with each other, breaking bread, and sharing life." She reminded us that we were family and that we had to watch out for each other and take care of each other. With Sister leading us, we did become family and still have that bond to this day. As the years went on, the two sisters and I grew closer. After 4:30 p.m. Mass on Saturdays, we would often have long dinners at Culver's, Sister's favorite place. We would visit about any topic that came up and had solutions for many of the world's problems. We jokingly lamented that the world would be a better place if only it would listen to us once in a while. Sister Clarenita was a beautiful, loving person that has left behind a legacy of encouragement, devotion, excellence, and love. I miss seeing her and talking with her. I miss her wisdom and friendship. But most of all, I look back over the years with thankfulness for everything she has given us. She has touched all of our hearts and we will never forget her.

Cathy Mortimer, friend and niece of Rosemunda Besch, BVM

Sister Clarenita was always a joy; I thought of her much like saint. As a lifelong friend of Sister Rosemunda, she became a part of the Besch family. I don't think she had any idea what she was in for. Sister Clarenita, an only child, and Sister Rosemunda, one of a very large family. The Besch family is not a quiet lot. They definitely have an opinion on every subject and they are always willing to share it if you're willing to listen. When they play cards, which is a regular event, it's Third World War. But Clarenita took it all in stride and was always a voice of reason in a very noisy place. Hence sainthood! I, as Sister Rosemunda's niece, always really enjoyed Sister Clarenita and the way she was so gentle and kind. I admired her and Sister Rosemunda's lifelong friendship. She will be missed by all of us, but we will think happy thoughts when we think of her.

Jerry, Deb, Kirk and Kate Poss, St. Michael parents and school board members

Words are never enough when it comes to sharing thoughts about someone as wonderful as Sister Clarenita. Sister was one of a kind. A true angel on earth who dedicated each and every day to her Lord for whom she was his humble servant. She was so beloved and respected by everyone—a true patriarch of our faith. She helped each of us to become better persons in life without us even knowing this, as she had the ability to always bring out the best in each one of us. I feel so blessed to have worked with her on the school board at St. Michael in Sioux City, Iowa, as well as having children at St. Michael's school. Our family adored her. She provided comfort, wisdom, and leadership to all of us at times when we needed it. I say this with some heartache here for all of us when I say that I do not know if anyone will ever meet someone so pure of spirit and with love for all people. Sister, we will keep you in our prayers each day and know that you are happy now serving our Lord in yet another capacity. God bless you and much love to you.

Mandy Stubblefield, former student

Sister Clarenita was such a special person! She was my principal in Sioux City, Iowa, at St. Michael's Catholic School from 1987 to 1997. When my mother passed away a year and a half ago, it was such a sweet surprise to see Sister Clarenita and Sister Rosemunda at the service. I'll never forget that act of love and support they showed us so many years later. Eternal rest grant unto her, Oh Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.

Ann Gullett Whitten, former student

Sister Mary Clarenita was my seventh and eighth grade teacher at Holy Redeemer School in Montrose, Calif. She was the most kind and wonderful nun and teacher. Her heart and soul were full of goodness and she was the best teacher I had throughout my school years. Sister was so open to conversation with us coming of age. She also enjoyed listening to Beatles songs with us. It was such a surprise when she attended our 25th year graduation reunion! It was so good to see her. I will remember her always. What a treasure she was to the children she taught and to this world.

Margee Krapfl, friend and colleague

I came to teach at St. Michael's school in Sioux City, Iowa, the same year that Sister Clarenita took the principal's position. What a blessing for me! She was a kind, gentle leader. She always gave positive guidance. I will treasure the memory of her friendship forever. Rest in peace, dear Sister.

Michelle Bonner Hudson, former student

Sister Clarenita was an amazing person. I met her in third grade when I transferred into St. Michael's School in Sioux City, Iowa. She was welcoming and just one of those people who could touch your life with her kindness. I counted on that kind smile on the rough days and her always being there as a sounding board if I needed to discuss things throughout my school years. I counted on it so much in fact that I asked her to be my Confirmation sponsor when the time came. She was there when we lost my father to extend her sympathies and check on the family. She was there when I got married to extend her congratulations and celebrate with us. She's been there through so many of my life's milestones. She will be greatly missed in person, but I know she is an angel watching over all she cared about and serving in a new role up in heaven.

Kay Econ, friend

Sister Clarenita was a living saint. She was so kind and caring to everyone who had the pleasure of knowing her. She will be greatly missed. To know her was such a blessing. She was there many times for our family and we will never forget her.

Sheila Smith, friend

Sister, we will miss you so much. A loss to all of us left on earth and a gain to have an angel like you in heaven. Sister was the principal at St. Michael's when we moved to Sioux City, Iowa, in 1991. She made our family feel so comfortable and welcome. She immediately knew the area in Minnesota where we came from because she

served in Melrose, which was about 30 miles from our home, so we felt that we had known her for a long time. I'll never forget her soft, soft voice and unbelievable mild manner. RIP, Sister!

Karen Matthey, former student

Sister Clarenita was the epitome of what a principal and teacher should be. St. Michael School in Sioux City, Iowa, was top notch thanks to her leadership. She guided a wonderful faculty. I had the good fortune of staying in touch with Sister Rosemunda and Sister Clarenita since they retired. What kind and beautiful servants. Rest in peace Sister Clarenita. I am so blessed to have known you.

Josette Kelly, BVM

Clarenita had fond memories of listening to classical music with her father and of attending concerts in Grant Park with him. She was drawn by the sound of the piano. Clarenita would often step into the heritage room when I was playing, listen for a while, and then leave just as quietly. Clarenita's kindness in the dining room was notable. With a remark or question, she would include everyone at the table in the conversation. Her gracious manner and smile will be missed.

Mary Fornelli Hunt, Class of 1952, Holy Family, Glendale, Calif.

Thinking of Sister Clarenita brought back many fond memories of my four years at Holy Family High. One of the best things I did for myself was to go from downtown Los Angeles by bus every day to Glendale. I met so many wonderful friends and learned so much, which has greatly improved my life. God Bless the BVM sisters.

Cindy Tiedeman, Naples, Fla., and Okoboji, Iowa

Sister Mary Clarenita was a devoted BVM who led by example every day at St. Michael Center in Sioux City, Iowa. I cherished my years working with Sister Clarenita at St Michael's. She was always patient and kind to all. She saw the good in every student, parent, and staff member. She took the time to listen and was fair to all. The prayer basket outside her office was always filled with prayer requests from students, staff, and parents. Everyone always wanted to be at school to share time with her. It was a joyous time in my life. Her kindness will always be in my heart.

Memories of the staff gathering at her condo for Christmas dinner and special gift exchanges were fun. There was always one gift that seemed to reappear every year!!! Who has the gift now?

The dinners were always delicious and everyone enjoyed sharing recipes. Trips to Wells Blue Bunny in LeMars for ice cream and Bob's Diner for hot dogs was an annual event for all staff, past and present, and it still continues to this day! It is usually held around Sister Clarenita's birthday, July 19. Everyone enjoyed catching up on what and where things are happening. We were all companions on the journey for life. Miles may separate us, but the love and prayers are always ongoing.

I always enjoyed when Sister Clarenita, Sister Rosemunda, and Sister Johanna Trisolieri came to Okoboji to sit on the dock. We would ride around the lake and look at the new homes being built and stop at Goodies Handmade Candies for biscotti, caramels, coffee, and candy.

Sister Clarenita made a difference in my life and in the lives of everyone at St. Michael Center. I will always cherish her memory. May she rest in peace, good and faithful servant and friend. We thank God for her life and are grateful for the lives of all religious—past, present, and to come.

Mary Anne Bradish, BVM

Claire and I were high school friends from Holy Family in Glendale, Calif. She was very helpful with many projects of our Sodality. She was a catechist at El Cristo Parish, involved in the Los Angeles County Hospital, and helped in many other ways, sharing not only her heart but her wisdom. Her parents were friends of my parents. They came to dinner at our home. Her dear mom, Myrtle, sewed my poplins. Her dad, Fred, like my

own dad, practiced no religion, but they liked sports. My mom, an R.N., was Myrtle's nurse in the hospital when she died. My mom also was asked by BVM Jean Dolores Schmidt to come and be with Claire and herself when they viewed Fred in his chair where he apparently died very peacefully. Her parents died within a year and she was an only child. It was such a special joy to connect with her again at Mount Carmel and to share life, talks, and rides to get ice cream. She was an inspiration with her gentle ways of acceptance and care for others.