



Eulogy of Sister Paulino Crabb, BVM
Marian Hall Chapel, May 17, 2020

Good morning. It is good to be together to celebrate the life of our Sister Mary Paulino Crabb.

Annabelle Pauline Crabb entered this world on June 9, 1923, in Los Angeles, as the first child born to Clarence and Pauline Kleebauer Crabb. Her brother Clarence, Jr. completed the family. Their parents made sure both Annabelle and Clarence were blessed with opportunities in their youth such as piano and dance lessons, including tap and ballet, and a variety of social encounters. Annabelle was a beautiful dancer and, as a BVM, enhanced community celebrations with her liturgical dance.

Both children were raised Catholic but attended public schools until 1941 when Annabelle enrolled at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles. There she met the BVMs through a college friend. "A Catholic institution and the opportunity to visit and have outings with the BVM sisters attracted me toward my vocation," she wrote. But her call to a religious vocation was delayed with the onset of World War II. During the war, Clarence served in the South Pacific while Annabelle worked in a defense munitions plant, in her words, "like Rosie the Riveter."

As the war neared its conclusion, Sister Margaret (Rosaria Paul) McGuire, BVM reached out to Annabelle and mentored her preparations for religious life. While the rest of her set crossed the threshold of the Mount Carmel Motherhouse on Sept. 8, 1945, Annabelle was boarding the train in Los Angeles. She arrived in Dubuque late at night and entered the congregation on the morning of Sept. 12, 1945. She received the name Paulino, Paulie to her friends, upon her reception on March 19, 1946, professed first vows on March 19, 1948, and lived 74 years as a BVM.

Paulino ministered as an elementary teacher for 38 years with missions at St. Anne in Santa Ana, Calif.; St. Bernard, Assumption, and St. Brendan in Los Angeles; and St. Agnes in Phoenix. She also served as principal at Our Lady of Lourdes in Tujunga, Calif.; and St Anne in Santa Ana; and as a resource person, secretary, and teacher at Visitation School in Los Angeles.

Paulino was known for recognizing a need and tackling it wholeheartedly. If her car needed washing, she would wash all the convent cars. When after an earthquake officials encouraged the creation of survival kits, Paulino created a kit for every car and a barrel for the house stuffed with items to meet all foreseeable needs in an emergency.

Paulino's interest and talents were many and varied. While at St. Agnes in Phoenix, she created an animated Christmas display of the Little Drummer Boy that found its home on the front lawn. She was knowledgeable about the heavens and the earth. She organized stargazing parties to watch meteor showers or point out the constellations, and she would tell the stories of the rocks to all who were interested. Paulino enjoyed gardening, keeping every tree and flowerbed weeded and neatly outlined with rocks. She would transform dark volcanic glass, commonly known as Apache Tears, into beautifully polished stones. Ever ready for a new adventure, it is no surprise that she also loved to travel.

But of all her gifts, Paulino is best known for her artistic talent. Art became her life-saver, her passion. An article in the Spring 1997 issue of *Salt* described how she discovered her talent. “[I]n the late 1970s, she accepted a position as an art teacher at Visitation School in Los Angeles, and the doors to a world of professional artists were opened . . . Moving to St. Philip’s in Pasadena, which happened to be across the street from Pasadena City College, Paulino was able to immerse herself more in the arts and the friendship of professional artists.

“It began with a BVM grant focused on enriching her art experience through classes and a European tour of high points in the world of art. This experience moved Paulino into teaching drawing and painting to senior citizens at the Pasadena Senior Center.

“‘You’d be thrilled to see the work these dear people can produce!’ she [said] enthusiastically. ‘To enable this growth is my fulfillment. As long as my health permits I shall enjoy this ministry to not only encourage, but also to listen to their problems and to support them during sickness. Little did I know that I would be led to a happy retirement.’”

Art was not Paulino’s sole fascination in Pasadena. The Rose Parade became a huge event in her life when she took advantage of the parade route to organize a parish fundraiser. She sold about 70 seats along Colorado Boulevard, the location of the Pasadena City College, put a name on each seat and even scheduled the BVMs at St. Philip to guard them. By 5 o’clock in the morning, everything was in order and breakfast was ready for the guests.

Paulino moved to Mount Carmel in 2005 and immediately volunteered as an art teacher for the Roberta Kuhn Center, located in the Barn at that time. Ever responsible and thorough, a true perfectionist, she quickly used her organizational skills to rearrange the art space and its countless supplies, and then proved herself to be a great teacher who was both enjoyed and appreciated by her adult students. Paulino also worked with Carolyn Farrell, BVM, then the director of the Roberta Kuhn Center, to move the classes to the lower level of the Motherhouse with the intent to form a stronger presence on the Mount Carmel campus.

Paulino was welcoming and generous, a true giver of her time and talents. Neither guests nor friends wanted for anything, for helping someone was never an inconvenience. Always doing things for others behind the scenes, she lived the words of Mother Clarke, “If our divine Lord and His sweet mother and St. Joseph know us and [are] pleased, no matter for the world.” (Mary Frances Clarke, Letter 85, Nov. 15, 1878). It is no wonder that she made lasting friendships with her BVM sisters, professional artists, former students, and so many others she met during her life’s journey.

“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts,” directed St. Peter. “Always be ready to give an explanation . . . for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence.” (1 Peter 3:15). Ever gentle, peaceful, and soft-spoken, Paulino’s acts testified to her faith and hope. Near the end of her life, her ministry was simply her precious smile. She would smile and soon there would be smiles all around. Surely her smile was never more beautiful than when Jesus welcomed her home.