



Eulogy of Sister Janice Link, BVM Caritas Studio, July 29, 2020

Good morning and welcome to the celebration of life of our Sister Janice Link.

Janice Link was born on Aug. 15, 1936, in Lefor, N.D., to Joseph and Anne Gion Link. She joined older brothers Wayne and Raymond and was followed by sisters Carol, Joanne, and Marilyn.

After graduating from high school in 1954, Jan requested to enter the community of Benedictine sisters in her local area. However, that convent was at capacity and not accepting new members, so Jan entered the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Benedict in Watertown, S.D., almost 400 miles from her home. There she received the name of Sister Sarah. This initial change of plans indicates Jan's ability to adapt to change, a skill that she used throughout her life.

After her novitiate, Jan began her ministry, which reads like a travelogue. In the course of 16 years, she was assigned to eight different schools, in eight different cities, in three different states. She was an elementary teacher in Colorado at St. Joseph in Pueblo and St. Therese in Aurora. She ministered as a junior high language arts and social studies teacher in South Dakota at Stephan Indian School in Stephan, St. Mary in Aberdeen, Holy Cross in Ipswich, and St. Anthony in Hoven. She taught high school social studies at Roncalli in Aberdeen, and was principal and elementary teacher at St. Bernard Indian School in Fort Yates, N.D.

At the age of 27, her Benedictine congregation sent Jan and a companion sister to Mundelein College in Chicago, where Jan completed a bachelor's degree in sociology. It was a major adaptation to live among 150 BVM sisters in the Scholasticate for two years. During this time Jan became well acquainted with a number of BVMs, especially the Set of 1960 and her dear friend, Rita Basta, BVM. Seven years later, in 1972, Jan transferred from the Benedictines to the BVM congregation and returned to her baptismal name, Janice. This major adaptation had an adjustment period built in to assist transfer candidates. While completing her transfer requirements, Jan lived with the BVMs and taught junior high religion and language arts at St. Cornelius in Chicago with Sister Marion Hurley, BVM, as her principal. Jan professed vows with the BVMs on June 16, 1974.

Jan then moved to California where she lived at Our Lady of Lourdes in Tujunga and taught elementary classes at St. Francis in Burbank and high school classes at Immaculate Heart in Hollywood. She also taught English as a Second Language (ESL) and worked intensely on social justice issues at the Peace and Justice Center of Southern California. Jan completed a master's degree in education and global studies from Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles in 1990, while teaching world history at Bishop Alemany High School in Mission Hills, Calif. In 1993, she was selected as an assistant administrator at the school. A major adaptation occurred when the 1994 Northridge earthquake demolished the campus and necessitated building a new campus at a nearby site.

The private diocesan high school featured a diverse student body of Hispanic, Asian, Black, and Filipino students. Jan related, "One of the most important understandings that I can develop in our students is that we are interdependent with all other countries. All of today's issues such as nuclear power, human rights, poverty, war, and peace affect every country. They also affect the relationships among countries."

Jan challenged her students to develop a larger world-view. She encouraged them to grow as persons by developing an internal strength, deepening their values, and maintaining respect for both self and others. She taught her students what Jesus taught his disciples: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven who makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous." (Matthew 5:44-45).

After administering to the young for 56 years, Jan retired and volunteered as a library and teacher's aide, and with Brothers' Helpers, a parish committee that prepares food for the homeless.

From her early years, Jan loved order in her life and maintained daily routines with diligence. She took care of her health and was a regular at the fitness center. Jan was a model of kindness and graciousness. Her happy countenance was so welcome to others as they engaged in conversation.

Jan enjoyed community life, but lived by herself for a few years after the parish in Tujunga no longer permitted sisters who did not teach in the school to live in the convent. However, preferring community life, she moved into a house with Rita Basta, BVM and Mercy Sister Carol Baetz, residing there until Rita's death in 2018.

Through the years Jan remained connected to her family in North Dakota and visited whenever possible. During summer breaks, she enjoyed traveling and attending BVM meetings that were scheduled a variety of cities—a perfect reason for an added vacation. Her greatest adaptations were saying farewell to Rita, her lifelong friend and mentor, and leaving her happy home in La Crescenta.

Once Jan arrived at Mount Carmel, she found a familiar way of life as she experienced the kindness and friendship of the sisters and the staff. She lived the last two years enjoying Sudoku and card games with her friends whenever possible. She loved going to the chapel and dining with the other residents.

All good things come to those who love our God. Jan, you faithfully lived your life with multiple adaptations along the way. May you find peace in your heavenly home where our gracious God welcomes you with joy.