



## **Wake Stories of Richard Ann Quilter, BVM**

Caritas Studio, July 24, 2020

### **Otilie Sana, BVM**

Sister Richard Ann and I were very good friends. We both taught at Our Lady of the Angels (OLA) in Chicago for many years. Richard Ann was such a generous and kind person! She was always knitting a baby afghan for an expected child, and she continued that here at Mount Carmel. She visited many families in the parish and helped them deal with life's difficulties. Richard Ann was a quiet, unassuming person who will be missed. Thank you, Richard Ann, for our long and joy-filled friendship!

### **Mary Angela Buser, BVM**

Richard Ann, a member of the September Set of 1945, welcomed our set when we arrived the following February. In the novitiate, I viewed Richard Ann as a very hard working, always congenial, and quiet person. After profession, our lives didn't cross until our Golden Jubilee celebration at Mount Carmel. During our group sharing, I recall Richard Ann sharing that she had been teaching first graders for many years and planned to return to OLA for another year to teach first grade. I admired her dedication and determination as it was evident that standing and walking had become difficult for her, and first grade teachers spend much time on their feet helping little ones.

During more recent years, I had the joy of living with Marion Murphy who had been Richard Ann's principal and friend at OLA for many of those years. Marion often exclaimed on how she depended on Richard Ann, and how willingly and effectively Richard Ann completed each task.

Since Richard Ann moved to Mount Carmel when Wright Hall closed, I have enjoyed many visits with her. Usually she would be knitting a baby afghan while watching TV, but she was always happy to welcome me. Thank you, Richard Ann, for those good visits that renewed our earlier connections and built others with Otilie's and Marion's families.

### **Helen Emerson, BVM**

Sister Richard Ann and I became friends when we lived at Wright Hall in Chicago. One day she asked me to set her clocks for daylight savings time and this I did for her right up to now. When Sister Richard Ann moved to Mount Carmel, she asked for me to be her mentor. I was happy to be with her and help her to feel at home. When she moved to Marian Hall, I continued to be her mentor and friend. We had weekly visits and Richard Ann kept up with all the news in the house and in the community. She kept me on my toes to be able to answer all her questions. When her eyesight grew poorly she could not read the BVM *Center News* so she would ask me to read it to her. She wanted to know what was going on. She made many afghans for babies and worked on puzzles. When she was knitting, she would ask Donard Collins, BVM to cast on for her and then away she'd go. As time went on she had to give up knitting and puzzles, too, but she didn't give up praying. She prayed for everyone. When a sister died, she would say nine rosaries for that sister. I found a note pad in her room that had Sister Joan Stritesky and Donard Collins' names on it with the numbers 1 to 9. Each number was crossed out which meant that Joan and Donard got their rosaries. I imagine all those sisters she prayed for were there to meet her when she arrived in her heavenly home. I never called her or went to see her in the morning because I knew she was

praying. Sister Richard Ann was a kind, gentle person. I never heard her complain. She was a blessing to me and I will miss her.

### **Rob O'Neil, former student**

Sister Mary Richard Ann taught me--and at least four of my nine siblings--in the second grade during the 1950s at Holy Redeemer School in Montrose, Calif. Sister's approach and reputation were as one who brooked no nonsense. We weren't "first-grade babies" anymore. She wasn't mean. She didn't shout. She just took to the business at hand. In fact, she reminded us of police detective Jack Webb in the popular 1950s TV series *Dragnet*: "Just the facts, ma'am."

When I was in sixth grade, my parents directed me get the homework assignments for my little brother in second grade who was home sick. I was nervous. In those days, illness was no excuse for slighting one's education. As I stumbled through my request for take-home work, Richard Ann cut me off. "Well, is he really sick, or not?" she demanded. I tried to explain his symptoms. She stopped me again. "Well, if he's that sick, I don't see how he could possibly want or do any homework." I left her classroom empty-handed. Sister Mary Richard Ann had done her usual and cut to the chase!

### **Carol Ann Spiegel, BVM**

No matter how confined she was by her physical limitations, Richard Ann maintained a cheerful and welcoming spirit. No doubt, she even kept that attitude of acceptance during this unusual season of restrictions on sports when her beloved Cubs could not play their regular games. Richard Ann was the pray-er for our Oak Park community and then for me. I count on her love and prayers to continue.

### **Gwen Farry, BVM**

I lived with Richard Ann Quilter at Holy Redeemer, Montrose, Calif., from 1964 to 1969. She was a beloved first grade teacher. As the second grade teacher for two years, I can attest to the fact that the students were well taught. I was surprised when the first student who didn't know an answer when called upon, replied, "I do not know because I was not paying attention."

Richard Ann did not drive, but she was the navigator whenever we went anywhere in the Los Angeles area. She had a wonderful sense of direction, aided by landmarks along the way. One Saturday the Los Angeles Dodgers invited all the religious sisters of the Archdiocese to a Dodgers/Cubs game at Dodger Stadium. There were hundreds in those days, all in various habits. The sisters were seated in one section and treated to hot dogs and drinks. Of course, TV and newspaper reporters were interested. As the game progressed, the only two who cheered for the Cubs were Clarenita Froehlich, BVM and Richard Ann. Her heart was always in Chicago.

### **Cheryl Hannah, BVM associate and former student**

Sister Mary Richard Ann taught me at Holy Redeemer in Montrose, Calif., in the 50s. She was a good teacher and played a big part in giving me a good solid education. We had a most enjoyable visit last October when I visited Mount Carmel, and I am grateful now for that memory. God bless her and reward her for all the good she did in her life. Many children were given a great start in life due to her efforts.

### **Mary Catherine (Susie) Beckman, BVM, moderator of the Immaculata Alumnae Association**

Several years ago Richard Ann asked me to pick up a girl she had taught at Our Lady of Angels. I don't remember what the girl's home situation was, but Richard Ann was like a mother to her. The girl and I then picked up Richard Ann at Wright Hall en route to Immaculata's annual luncheon. The girl did not go to Immaculata, but Richard Ann had kept in touch with her. I was delighted to be part of this grand reunion.

### **Vicki Smurlo, BVM, Montrose, Calif.**

It was only within the last three years that I got to know Sister Richard Ann. One of her former students from Holy Redeemer grade school in Montrose, Calif., asked me about her and I then located her at our infirmary in

Dubuque, Iowa. I looked her up while in Dubuque for a meeting, and was quickly charmed by her sweet and friendly disposition, sense of humor, and sparkling eyes. Her love for summer Cubs baseball, and Jeopardy on TV, plus word search games were quite evident. It's no wonder that her student of many years ago was impressed as a youth and for years thereafter. The joy of technology was that I was able to send him a photo of her immediately. She was loveable and loved and I'll miss her as a relatively new friend. Our hearts happily connected again on all my subsequent visits and will in heaven too. Rest in peace, dear Sister.

**Robert Denstedt, friend**

I was very fortunate to have met Sister Richard Ann at Our Lady of Angels Parish in Chicago. Sister will long be remembered by her students and their parents for her quiet, gentle, and compassionate nature, which surely endeared her to all with whom she lived and worked. She had a great sense of humor, a ready smile, and was always willing to help in any given situation. She will be warmly embraced by the God she served so well as a religious. Rest in peace, dear friend.

**Mary Healey, BVM**

Remember a time in *Little Women* when the March family needed money and Jo sold her hair for \$25. Richard Ann had glorious hair—long, thick, curly, and a lovely color that never grayed. I wonder how much it was worth.

**Vicki Smurlo, BVM** (*Email sent to Richard Ann on May 14, 2019*)

Greetings from Southern California, Montrose to be exact, where your students are still remembering you. I bring you greetings from the O'Neils. I was with the O'Neils for some of Mother's Day and lots of family were there. Rob, who always asks about you, was there naming the kids. I was at the funeral of Mrs. Tommie Stopper. You taught her sons Steve, John, Edward, and Tim. They too have great memories of you as a teacher.

But it was Stuart Downs, a second grade student of yours in the 1960s, who asked me to contact you. He said, "Tell her I'm now a college professor at a Catholic University in San Diego. I have nothing but wonderful memories of her and I thank her for everything." And so it is. You helped many, and he's one who still adores you with fond memories.

**Father Robert A. Barbato, OFM Cap, former student** (*Email sent to Richard Ann on Jan. 14, 2019*)

I had Sister Mary Richard Ann as my first grade teacher at Holy Redeemer School in Montrose, Calif. I wanted to thank her and let her know I became a Capuchin Franciscan Friar in 1977 and was ordained a priest in 1987. I am now pastor of Old Mission Santa Ines in Solvang, Calif. God bless you, Sister!