



Sharing of Memories of Janice Link, BVM Caritas Studio, July 29, 2020

Mary Jean Ferry, BVM

I was moved to talk about Jan because of her gentle, loving presence with us. Jan was a vital part of our community in California. This morning Jan moved me to share her love for planet Earth. Many years ago, she wrote a prayer service that I've used many times because of the power of the gestures. This morning Jan invites us to lift up our hands and in our hands try to imagine our planet—to imagine its wide cloud cover . . . to imagine its blue waters covering the earth . . . to imagine its land masses. Jan also says to us—imagine its polluted waters . . . the flooding oceans . . . its many, many hurting people. Jan then simply asks us to take Earth and gently hold it close to our heart . . . to feel it . . . to breathe with it . . . to love . . . and, especially, to renew our promise to care for our beautiful planet Earth. Amen. Jan, we thank you for your presence that remains with us. We miss you very much and we love you.

Roberta White, BVM

I call Jan a woman of hospitality and care. She, Rita Basta, BVM and Sister Carol Baetz, RSM so often invited us—we at Holy Redeemer about two miles away—with their twin parish of St. James to their prayer services, feast days, and lovely meals at their home. They were so gracious and hospitable to us all in Southern California, but especially to us at Holy Redeemer. Jan was so hospitable. She loved going every week to Brother's Helpers, a group that fixed meals for the homeless in Los Angeles. They fixed meals for over 300 people and the men would take the meals down in vans and serve them at the meal site every Thursday. Holy Redeemer did it on Tuesdays. It was a beautiful greeting of hospitality to the homeless. She was also a woman of care. She cared so much about Rita and Carol, especially when Rita was sick with cancer for over three years. She was so caring and helpful to Rita in so many ways. After Rita died and Jan came to Mount Carmel, she took Mary Jeanne Stopper as a friend and cared so much for her. She made sure she went down to the Roberta Kuhn Center to the music appreciation class and to Kitty Lawlor's BVM history class. Of course, every day they played "Kings in the Corner" card game, often with Mary O'Connor and sometimes Sue Rink on Caritas fourth floor. She was just a wonderful woman of hospitality and care. I thank you, Jan, for the example you gave us. May we follow in your footsteps.

Mary Martens, BVM

I got to know Jan after she had transferred from her Benedictine community in North Dakota and professed her vows as a BVM in the 1970s. Both of us were living in Southern California and teaching there. We were both relative newcomers to the area, taking advantage of opportunities to socialize among the many BVMs then living and ministering in the region. She was friendly and welcoming, and we both enjoyed those gatherings.

Jan and her longtime dear friend Rita Basta, BVM lived together for many years, sharing friendship with Barbara Cerny, BVM and her housemate, Mercy sister Carol Baetz, who lived nearby. Just before Jan moved to Mount Carmel, she and Rita spent time in the same care facility in Montrose.

My most recent and favorite memory of Jan involves some fairly frequent visits to Mount Carmel's memory care unit up until March and the coronavirus. Always Jan and her friend Mary Jeanne Stopper and sometimes one or two other sisters would be playing cards when I arrived. Always I was invited to join, especially when it was just the two of them. To do so, I needed tutoring on their favorite game of "Kings in the Corner." The game occupied

Jan and Mary Jeanne for a significant part of many afternoons. They were both much sharper than I in getting rid of all their cards quickly. Many times when I thought I had played all the possibilities in my hand, Jan would point out something on the table I had overlooked and would have me play it anyway. Clearly it wasn't about winning a card game, but about enjoying the companionship of friends during quiet afternoons.

What stands out for me when I think about Jan is the value and the richness of relationships, truly a value for all of us BVMs.

Sister Carol Baetz, RSM

Jan and I lived together in Tujunga and La Crescenta, Calif., for approximately 20 years. Can you imagine milking cows before breakfast, going to school in a one-room schoolhouse, or taking a horse and buggy to church on Sunday? Jan grew up in North Dakota, and those were her usual experiences as a child. I listened to Jan in astonishment as she informed me of her young life on the farm. Jan and I are approximately the same age, and I couldn't fathom that way of life existing anywhere in the United States, as my upbringing was in Los Angeles.

Jan was an introvert. Her words were few, but her talents and interests were many. She was a professional seamstress. She sewed many beautiful outfits for her good friend, Sister Rita Basta, BVM—one of which Rita wore on her 25th jubilee.

Jan was strongly committed to social justice. She participated in marches and demonstrations in downtown Los Angeles in the late 1980s and 1990s. During that time, Jan worked at the Social Justice Center in Los Angeles. Then, while living at St. James the Lesser Parish in La Crescenta, one day a week Jan helped prepare the evening meal for the homeless in downtown Los Angeles as a member of Brothers' Helpers.

Later, Jan was a history teacher at Alemany High School, which is in the San Fernando Valley—about a 10-mile drive. Every morning early, Jan picked up the *L.A. Times* from the driveway and read the main section thoroughly so that she would have the latest current events for her students. In the evening, Jan watched the national and the local newscast astutely.

For enjoyment, Jan happily set out a jigsaw puzzle. She'd immediately put the four sides together, and then left the rest of the puzzle to be shared by others whenever we passed or were so inclined to hunt for a new piece. Sometimes when friends arrived, they'd put in a few more pieces. That made Jan happy! The puzzle was being completed faster, so then she could start a new one! Jan was a Sudoku and crossword puzzle champ, and she frequently got the "Wheel of Fortune" puzzle before Sister Rita or I did. The dinner dishes always needed to be finished by 7 p.m. so that we could watch "Wheel" and "Jeopardy." Afterwards, Jan was happy to go to her room and read in bed unless we decided to play a game such as "Rummikub," which Jan loved to do . . . and she especially loved to win!

Ann Kendall, BVM

Jan Link had a bright welcoming smile. She was a generous person, doing whatever was requested of her as she built the local community. At Mount Carmel, her mischievous look would appear when she was playing cards and she spotted a possible play by one of her card playing friends. Quietly, she would let the other person know that there was another play on the board. As her health failed her and she was in terrible pain with her back, one rarely heard a complaint. Jan had a firm gentleness with a sparkle in her eye. It was a pleasure for Rita Basta, BVM and Carol Baetz, RSM to live with Jan for many years in the Southern California area.

Monica Bittis, BVM Associate

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, I had the pleasure of knowing and working with Sister Janice at St. Francis Xavier in Burbank, Calif. Gentle, kind and compassionate, she generously helped me through some family issues as well as joining me on my journey to Association with the community in 1983. For all the blessings she brought me, I will forever hold "Sister Dear" in my heart.

Nancy McCarthy, BVM

Since I did not attend the Scholasticate, I did not meet Jan when she first joined our set, and consequently never got to know her as well as some did. However, over the years, Jan and Rita attended many BVM gatherings together. I especially remember them coming to Women's Network meetings in Chicago when they were held in January. They sometimes needed to borrow winter coats. I remember one year when they prepared a beautiful prayer for the gathering complete with seashells and other California "environment." The one time I had close contact with Jan was when she first experienced hearing loss and was having trouble in her classroom. She asked my advice about how to 'adjust' to hearing aids and I tried to help her. She managed very well, in spite of additional vision problems, and managed to continue many years in the classroom. When Jan moved to Mount Carmel, it was a new way of relating. Our set used to try to gather for the 'Sunday social' on the last Sunday of every month. Jan would join us and was able to participate in some of the 'sharing' since her long-term memory was still working fairly well. She had difficulty with our names, but could always talk about Rita Basta, with whom she lived for so many years. We'll definitely remember her when we celebrate our 60th.

Katherine Heffernan, BVM

Janice and I spent two happy years living on the seventh floor of Wright Hall in Chicago. We were two of the eight transfer sisters who were living there. It was our first orientation into BVM life and relationships. It was a very positive experience. We liked exploring this new religious world together. Janice was teaching in a parochial school, but she had no intention of remaining in the Midwest. She was California bound and she was always glad she made that decision.

Janice was very faithful about coming back for gatherings. Whenever she came back we managed to spend time together so we were able to maintain our relationship. I was able to visit her house in California as well. So many things were special about Janice. She was a lovely gift.