



Sharing of Memories of Eileen E. Fuchs, BVM
Caritas Studio, Sept. 3, 2020

Audrey Juergens, BVM

Eileen was a wonderful teacher. I knew her as a friend. She would help anyone who needed help. She would come to her job as the first one there and the last one to leave with everything all cleaned up and put back in place. You have one more job now, Eileen. Go with your God, my love.

Lou Anglin, BVM

Audrey and I had the great blessing of living in community with Eily in St Louis for many, many years. And like most everything associated with Eily, it was an adventure. Eily lived *big*. She didn't do much of anything just a little bit.

Eily wasn't just friendly. The woman never met a stranger. She could strike up a conversation before most people could even say hello. She wasn't just a Cardinal baseball fan. She knew every player, their earned run average, where they played before they came to the Cardinals, their pennant history. She just didn't find astronomy interesting; she was fascinated by it, learned all she could, and shared what she knew.

She wasn't just a great teacher. She was totally dedicated to her students and loved her faculty friends. If something came off her Bucket List, two more things were added.

And what was best and biggest of all was her heart. She adored her family, treasured her March Madness friends and all her BVM Sisters, her Quincy friends, her St. John's friends, her Nerinx friends. Eily was as real as they come. You could talk to her about anything. She didn't pretend to be anyone other than who she was and that made it safe for others to be themselves as well. There's no greater gift in the world.

I loved her dearly and am having a hard time right now imagining life without her. She leaves a big hole. But mostly, I am just so grateful for the opportunity to have had her in my life all these years. I know the world is a better place because she of her. I'm better because of her. Our community is better because of her.

Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM

I first met Eileen on the center stairs at Mount Carmel. Ann DeNicolò, then on the formation team, introduced her as almost sure she was going to enter the BVMs. I remember walking away hoping I had helped make her decision certain. Within the next few years, Eileen did indeed enter the community and I received the blessing of being her novice directress.

In those early years, novices Eileen, Isabel Conchos, Amy Golm, and Kathy Kandefer and I, as a formation team, shared many experiences. One that is illustrative of the whole of Eileen's life was a trip to California where we ministered at Sacred Heart Community Service and visited BVMs from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Eileen's huge heart embraced with ease those accessing the resources at Sacred Heart as well as each BVM in a multitude of BVMs she was meeting all at once for the first time. Her innate spirit of love and joy evoked that same spirit in others and made community happen.

In the 25 years since that beginning, I have experienced personally that, once you let Eileen walk into your life, she never walks out; we became friends. Our frequent connections and the conversations that marked them were natural and never insignificant. During her cancer treatments, she spoke about the compassion of her students who shaved their heads in solidarity; during her time of sabbatical and attentiveness to personal health, she spoke her desire to be good for the community that was so good to her.

During my years in leadership she supported me with her appreciation and affectionate challenges, and later gave me the gift of discerning with her the call she heard to congregational leadership. We even mused about how to relate to the God of the universe story and imagined religious life in the future. In these months of physical separation due to COVID-19, we talked on the phone. She wanted to know what my life was like as an internal Mount Carmel volunteer and shared how hard it was for her that, due to the quarantine, she herself could not help. Most recently we celebrated her silver jubilee in a call that caught her in the car on her way back from the Spiders.

If there was an ache in Eileen's heart it was that her care was always bigger than what her heart, expansive as it was, could hold. Now from eternity she embraces us all infinitely in her care. I love you, Eileen, to the moon and back—and I will be making that journey often in the days to come.

Paulette Skiba, BVM

When Eileen was in the novitiate, I became aware of a habit Eileen had of making up stories about people she passed by along her way. She said this would entertain her as she drove to the various locations of the novitiate. She kept this practice, at least I continued to notice it. She would also do this with animals. This summer there were ongoing stories created about a black squirrel she named Benji who could regularly be seen with a grey one.

Eily *wanted* to know everyone's stories and people were willing to open up to her. She had a way of connecting with people. She had a friendship with the man at the dump at the Spiders. I talked to him too—mostly about township events and his dogs. But Eily came home from one trip to the dump with a suggested reading list of books he had recommended! She *saw* him more deeply. After Eily had gone for the summer and I went to the dump, I got to hear how much her friend thought of this, as he put it, “amazing woman.”

She not only wanted to *know* people's stories, she shared her story. I suspect that some of the most memorable lessons her high school students learned was the way she shared her fight with cancer. By sharing her story, she allowed students to learn to walk with her—a lesson they will draw upon later in life. Although when she was a novice I really did not “get” her stories, I came to see this as her way of practicing seeing people, *really* seeing people. Ultimately this came from her desire to walk with people, to accompany them along the way—squirrels included. She left many people wishing they had a lot more time to walk with her.

Luann Brown, BVM

Eileen was a very, very dear friend. I, too, am struggling to imagine life without her. I had a tremendous experience of spending the month of July with Eileen and saw what everybody said about her reaching out to people—leaving extra tips because she cared about those who were suffering from underemployment during COVID-19. Her tendencies and her orientation was always toward the wellbeing of other people.

It was a tremendous experience traveling with her during the month of July. As I always do with Eileen, we had a wide range of experiences—laughter, superficial conversation, deep conversation, and everything in between. I have, for a long time, been compiling a list of God questions—things I'm going to ask God when I get the chance. We have often talked about the God questions. Previously, with another friend, we came up with this idea that purgatory is probably standing in line with your list of God questions. The waiting is purgatory. I've been asking people what they think their line would be like and what would make your line more purgatorial. Eileen's answer was that she would just keep letting people in ahead of her because they had a greater need than she did and she would never get to the front of the line. I can picture her now in that line, making friends, making it a happier

place, letting everybody go ahead of her, and making that purgatory line heaven by the way she brings joy and laughter and care and concern about others. Eileen, wherever you are, thank you so much for your presence in my life.

Isabel Conchos, BVM

This is a reflection on Psalm 8 for you, Eily.

Psalm 8: God, our God, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

Eily was in the next room telling us that she loved the heavens and the earth, the Mississippi River and the trees, the Loggia and the clouds. She sat outside on the dock at the Spiders with Lou, Paulette, and Luann, and watched without end, the play of the waters against the pier. She contemplated the flow of the lake, a personal joy only she could experience as she raced to the shore.

After a hard day's work at the construction site in Ecuador, Eily sat under a tree with Annie, Cindy, and Sassy, graciously accepting a bowl of food from a lovely Ecuadorian lady.

Yes, Eily sat in the next room and she enjoyed a sunrise with Kathleen, Ann, and Sharon, because it was exclusively hers. She would share a sunset with Kathy, Mary, Lou, and me, because the imprint of God's creation is in the signature of the stars. Do you realize now why Eily liked to look up to the heavens in the night with Lou, Paulette, Lynn, and Anne Marie?

Eily looked at *your heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you created*, and she sang with Amy, LaDonna, and Pat in wondrous praise: *God, our God, how glorious is your name over all the earth!*

In the center of that wonder we, Eily and I, saw Ann DeNicolo, Kathy Kandefer, and Mary Ann Zollmann, ready to avail themselves of the spiritual benefits in store for us during our formation. *Who are we that God should be mindful of us, that God should care for us by having us journey with Ann, Kathy, and Mary Ann?*

Indeed, Eily's center was in the depths of her soul. There was an importance and wonder of our March Madness sisters to Eily and to us. That is, the journey with our big sister, Dorothy Heiderscheit, OSF, was paralleled to following the road to Emmaus with our faith-filled companion.

Can you imagine the smile in the room in recognizing that God has invited Eily and me and our BVM Sisters and Associates to grow together in wholeness and holiness along with Mary Frances Clarke?

Eily shared that she knew her smallness and her greatness, her dignity and her nothingness. She knew that her deceased BVM Sisters and family were waiting for her in the next room that has been lit up with her wit, conversation, and love. Eily wants to enjoy everything God has given her and we know God's heart and Eily's heart beat as one now!

God, our God, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

(Reflection written by Isabel Conchos, BVM and based on the writings of Father Carlos Valles, SJ in *Psalms for Contemplation*, Loyola University Press, 1990.)

Patricia Kerz, BVM, Emelyn Malecki, BVM, and Carol Spiegel, BVM

We lived with Mary Therese Freymann, BVM at McHugh Senior Apartments. During Mary Therese's final journey, we saw Eileen's compassion in action. She was present to Mary Therese in all the hospitals where she received care during those last months. Eileen's kind words and smiles eased those weeks for all of us. Now, may both of them enjoy their friendship, healthy forever.

Katie Heffernan, BVM

Eileen was a very special person for me because I knew and loved her grandfather and her uncle Bob many long years ago, probably before she was born. Eileen's grandfather, Mr. Fuchs, was the manager of the bookstore at St. Louis University during the four years that I attended. Allowing undergraduate women to attend SLU was relatively new and extra accommodations were scarce. But Mr. Fuchs provided a great alternative for us. He provided us with a very large wooden box to sit on and he put it in the middle of the bookstore. It was for the

female students only and it was at the center of our college gossip, etc. for our four years. Doris Walsh, deceased BVM, was one of our small group. Whenever I would see Eileen I would start telling her stories about Mr. Fuchs and his many kindnesses to the women undergraduate students.

Mr. Fuchs' son Bob, Eileen's uncle, was a student at SLU at this same time and we became friends. Bob Fuchs was very smart in math—and so was Eileen. After we graduated from SLU, the next time I saw Bob Fuchs was at Eileen's vow ceremony. I was attending with my two nieces and Bob was there with his wife and family.

There is one more important connection between my family and Eileen's. Eileen taught my niece Janie while Janie was a high school student. Of course Janie loved her. I sent Janie and my two other nieces Eileen's picture so they can keep it in their memory book. I have my own memory keepsake. It is one gold earring that Mr. Fuchs gave me after he found it in his bookstore. It was only one earring and the owner never came back for it. I would tell Eileen that I was going to give it to her when it was my time to downsize and move to Dubuque. She would just laugh.

Mary Nolan, BVM

Eileen's death was a shock to me; to us; and maybe to herself? So this poem seems appropriate.

The Homecoming

The spirit, newly freed from earth,
is all amazed at the surprise
of her belonging: suddenly
as native to eternity
to see herself, to realize
the heritage that lets her be
at home where all this glory lies.

By naught foretold could she have guessed
such welcome home: the robe, the ring,
music and endless banqueting,
these people hers; this place of rest
known, as of long remembering
herself a child of God and pressed
with warm endearments to His breast.

Jessica Powers (1984)

I have two memories. Eileen Fuchs and her sisters Terry, Cece, and Betsy attended Nerinx, a Loretto high school in St. Louis. Some BVMs taught there and one of them, Lou Anglin, really inspired her. After serving as a hospital technician for 10 years, Eily began searching for more meaning in her life—maybe even a faint call to religious life. She visited some communities and then one day, thanks to the suggestion of Lou, she made an appointment to see Ann DeNicolo, then serving in BVM formation. Eily drove to Dubuque, entered by the old, glass door and Ann was waiting at the top of the stairs, all smiles. Eily recounted to me that meeting Ann and walking into Mount Carmel, she felt such immense peace and as the interview developed she felt enveloped in hospitality. Wow!

As she got to know the BVMs, she was invited to attend a BVM funeral in the Marian Hall Chapel. She told me it was the first ever funeral that she attended where there was such palpable love, contagious joy, and profound peace. Why wouldn't she choose such a life and such a final farewell? My sadness remembering this exchange is the bare fact that she left us all so quickly and we are not able, due to COVID-19, to give her such a sendoff today.

Kathleen Conway, BVM

One of Eily's most obvious characteristics was her generosity. One summer at the Spider's, Eily was sitting on the front porch reading when she heard a loud crack. The crack was soon followed by a crash and the sound of broken glass. She looked outside to check and saw that one half of a tree had crashed through the back windshield of a green Prius. She came to my room where I was reading and asked "Do you own a green Prius?" I did. We all went out to inspect the damage. The whole back windshield was broken and the tree was nestled inside the trunk. "What am I going to do? What am I going to do?" I moaned. I was scheduled to return to Chicago the next day, Sunday. Everyone went into cleanup mode. Eily called a repair shop in Hayward who was just closing for the day and asked him to wait a while until we could get there with the car. She drove with me to the garage assuring me that all would be well. The owner fitted plastic sheeting over the rear window and we drove back with the plastic squealing in the wind. I was willing to drive alone the next day, but Eileen insisted that she drive with me though it would mean cutting her vacation short by a few days. She seemed unconcerned that her own car was in Dubuque. The trip took two hours longer than it usually did, but we chatted the whole 10 hours. She stayed overnight and then took a bus to Dubuque the next day. I was very touched and grateful for the generous spontaneity of her offers of assistance and her "aw shucks, it was nothing" attitude.

Agnes M. "Dee Dee" Keena, BVM

Spoken from my heart . . . Many of you may know that Eily, along with some of the students from Nerinx High School, worked on a mobile water purifier to be used in countries where water was not safe to use. Eily called me one day and asked if she could come to Ozora, a farming community south of St. Louis, with some of her students. She told me about the project and they needed something she was sure we had in Ozora—manure. At first I thought she was joking, but she wasn't. Eily explained to me that heat from the manure could be used to fuel this purifier. So Eily and her students came down armed with large barrels and shovels. We went to the closest farm. We all climbed into the hay wagon and were taken out into the fields looking for the piles of manure, which weren't hard to find. As everyone was shoveling there was laughter all around. One girl kept saying, "Wait until I tell my parents what I did today—shovel manure." I witnessed the wonderful rapport Eily had with her students. I also realized what a very creative problem solver she was. Later, she said to me, "I never dreamed I would be shoveling manure as a BVM, but why not, we know the earth has treasures to offer us. All we have to do is open our eyes or perhaps our nose." Each time Eily and her students came to "shovel" I realized how blessed these students were to have Eily in their life.

Three years ago on Aug. 21, Eily came to Ozora to watch the total eclipse of the sun. We had the perfect spot on our parish grounds and the longest viewing time to witness this event. As you know her knowledge of the sky was amazing. Before the eclipse occurred, she told us that the earth would be in darkness, the birds would cease from singing, and there would be stillness. Gradually she said the light would return and the sounds of nature would be heard. It happened just as she said. As the sun was totally uncovered the birds began to sing and everyone spontaneously clapped.

Well, when I read of Eily's illness and being in isolation, I couldn't help think of the day of the eclipse when the sky darkened and everything was silent. Eily, during her illness, was in darkness and silence. I wonder if while awaiting the light she anticipated hearing the birds sing and the people clap. We know her eclipse has ended. She is now in the full eternal light. As her darkness and silence broke, this lover of the universe, I believe, heard the sounds of welcoming and people clapping and hugging once more, especially her loved ones. So I invite each of us to put our hands together and clap for this lover of the universe, our Moon Lady, our friend, and our BVM sister, and believe she has entered into the eternal light.

Irene Lukefahr, BVM

All last week I participated in a webinar on Mary Magdalen. Kayleen Asbo, the presenter, shared this lovely poem with us. It reminded me of Eileen Fuchs, who is surely celebrating her 25th entrance anniversary into our BVM Community in ways that she could never have imagined. Be at peace, Moon Lady. Continue to shine your light on all of us during these uncertain times. Blessings.

In Any Event

If we are fractured
we are fractured
like stars
bred to shine
in every direction,
through any dimension,
billions of years
since and hence.
I shall not lament
the human, not yet.
There is something
more to come, our hearts
a gold mine
not yet plumbed,
an uncharted sea.
Nothing is gone forever.
If we came from dust
and will return to dust
then we can find our way
into anything.
What we are capable of
is not yet known,
and I praise us now,
in advance.

Dorianne Laux

Sandra Rodemyer, BVM

I suspect that Eileen, our Moon Lady, was too sick to pay attention to the phases of the moon of late. So, in her honor, I have looked up what phase the moon was in on the day that she died. It was in the Waxing Gibbous phase, which means that its illumination was about 58 percent on Aug. 26 as it headed to the full moon phase on Sept 2. (Gibbous means that the moon looks "humpbacked.") The September full moon will be called the Full Corn Moon.

So as our moon was "ascending" to its fullness, Eileen "ascended" to the full glory of her resurrection. Thank you, Moon Lady, for always calling our attention to the stars, the moon, and the Heavens above!

Patricia Donahoe, BVM

Jesus promised many mansions. Eileen asked for the moon. Perhaps we'll see two moons? Remembering her as "always loving us."

Diane Rapozo, BVM

For today (Sept. 2, 2020) my Earth Calendar says, "Lift your face to the moonlight and give thanks." We remember Eileen Fuchs as we look at the full harvest moon this evening and give thanks for her life shared among us.

Marjorie Heidkamp, BVM

This is to all BVMs and associates who loved Eily and her updates on the night skies. But it is especially the March Madness (and St. Louis) group(s) to whom I want to express sympathy and concern. You are touched by Eileen's loss in a different way than the rest of us. She is part of your unique "set." What a gift she has been to all of us—

and especially to her March Madness companions on the journey. Look for a sign in the skies in the next few nights.

Bette Gambonini, BVM

Other than spending time at the Spiders periodically and reconnecting at BVM gatherings, my relationship with Eileen was a long-distance one. She would talk about her love of teaching and opening and expanding the minds of her students. She was excited to begin her ministry as a Congregational Representative, getting to know the sisters and sharing her medical knowledge with those with whom she walked. She was a caring, compassionate person. Eily surprised me about three years ago when she asked to join the Senate Choir. I never knew she liked to sing. It was a delight to discover her hidden musical talent.

My last contact with Eily was a virtual dinner Marilyn Wilson, Elizabeth Avalos, and I had with her about two months ago. During our virtual dinner she spoke with honesty, humor, and care. She found it hard to be so isolated and not to be able to visit the sisters, to be limited to phone conversations. We laughed a lot about her not liking to cook and our love of cooking and how grateful she was for Paulette's food deliveries. Eily was a people person; staying-in-place was challenging for her. So our virtual dinner was a fun night out. Her laughter, phone calls, and our email conversations will be missed.

Amy Golm, BVM

As we continue to grieve together not only the multiple losses of BVMs and associates we have experienced this year, but also the many losses brought about by the pandemic, racism, etc., I would like to share a poem with you. This poem, by Stanley Kunitz, provides a way to cope with loss. I often use it when I give presentations about grief. I hope you take some comfort in "The Layers." As we grapple with the death of Eileen Fuchs and so many dear others, I invite us to "live in the layers not on the litter." In gratitude that we move through this life together.

The Layers

By Stanley Kunitz

I have walked through many lives,
some of them my own,
and I am not who I was,
though some principle of being
abides, from which I struggle
not to stray.
When I look behind,
as I am compelled to look
before I can gather strength
to proceed on my journey,
I see the milestones dwindling
toward the horizon
and the slow fires trailing
from the abandoned campsites,
over which scavenger angels
wheel on heavy wings.
Oh, I have made myself a tribe
out of my true affections,
and my tribe is scattered!
How shall the heart be reconciled
to its feast of losses?
In a rising wind
the manic dust of my friends,

those who fell along the way,
bitterly stings my face.
Yet I turn, I turn,
exulting somewhat,
with my will intact to go
wherever I need to go,
and every stone on the road
precious to me.
In my darkest night,
when the moon was covered
and I roamed through wreckage,
a nimbus-clouded voice
directed me:
“Live in the layers,
not on the litter.”
Though I lack the art
to decipher it,
no doubt the next chapter
in my book of transformations
is already written.
I am not done with my changes.

Mary Schmittgens, OP

I worked with Eileen at Nerinx Hall for about 15 years. What a big heart and big laugh! I heard from her on St. Dominic's feast day (Aug. 8). She had a special love for the Sparkill Dominicans, starting at Little Flower School. She expressed concern how we were doing during the pandemic. A very special person. How blessed am I to know her! Thanks, Eileen.

Sheila

My thoughts and prayers are with all her family and loved ones. Sister Eileen's beautiful personality will be truly missed.

Beth Caverly

I just heard about this tragic news. I met Eileen in 2016 while she was here in Michigan. We became fast friends. She meant the world to me. I am so sorry for the loss to the BVM Community. She had such insight into spirituality. She taught me more about God's love than my 12 years of Catholic education and 53 years of life before meeting her. I will miss her so very much. Condolences to her family and her family of sisters and students she touched throughout her shortened life.

Terry McGauley, sister

Beth, you were such a support to Eily in a very difficult period of her life. Thank you for being such a good friend. I'm so happy we were able to meet on our trip to Michigan. Will always keep you in my prayers.

Marge Menius

What a loss of a wonderful person and friend. Sympathy to Lou and the BVM order. The world is a little less for her passing.

Patricia Sullivan Viniard

Rest in peace, Eileen. What a loss to this earth; what a gain to Heaven!

Michael Bartz

Eileen was one of the good ones: she loved her students, her colleagues, the Cardinals, her faith, and her struggles—her personal demons which she humbly shared with those who cared, and the fight for social justice in all its aspects within a Gospel context. I remember riding with her to senior retreat her first year and asking about her plans. She said she thought she'd stay at Nerinx three years and then move on because "teaching wasn't really her thing." Well she stayed for 15 years and was, for me and many others, the consummate teacher—loving her students, working tirelessly and selflessly, and always (well mostly) having a whole bunch of fun! On many days when I was dragging she was an inspiration for me when I'd hear that clarion voice above the clamor: "GIRLS, IT'S TIME TO GET TO CLASS!" I knew it was time for me to get it in gear, too. Thanks, Eileen.

Chris Clark

Sister Eileen was my mentor when I began working as a college counselor at Nerinx Hall. She patiently addressed all my questions and helped me navigate the school. She worked tirelessly as a teacher and senior moderator. I learned the hard way not to sit next to her at sporting events for the school if I wanted my eardrum to not ring for days! She truly cheered from the bottom of her soul. My heart goes out to her family, Lou, and the BVM order. You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Cathy Hartrich

How do we solve a "problem" like Eileen?! (Referencing *The Sound of Music*.) What a woman, what a dear friend to so many. What a beautiful life and so completely authentic. Such a clear-headed social justice advocate. I spent many a free period at Nerinx Hall with Eileen musing about the social situations in our country, in our church, in our communities. I could always count on complete frankness and valuable insights. She could clear up any fuzziness on just about anything. And she was so incredibly fun! Never a down day with Eileen, even when she struggled with physical loss. She knew how to put a positive spin on it all. We'll miss you Eileen. Remember us. Say hello to Kevin B. for all the faculty and former faculty of Nerinx.

Ariel Martin Roukaerts

I feel lucky to have known Sister Ei and her warm heart. Intelligent, fierce, funny, and kind. I'm so sad we are without her but will remember her always.

Mary Ruoff

I grew up to next door to Eily (That's what we called her!) and her family, including sister Cece, who was just a year older than me and a few years younger than Eily. Reading these adult memories and reflections evokes childhood and teenage memories of her kindness, her sweet smile, and her interest in what I was up to. I recall especially talking with her about my sports accomplishments and activities at Rosati-Kain High School when I was older. The Cards, too! Chatting on their long front porch or the stairs above the sidewalks; those are wonderful memories. She had that sweet smile and laugh, and her wisdom stood out even then. Thank you for gifting my life and this world. I feel blessed and humbled that your kindness is touching me again, as you go to the Lord. My condolences to Cece, Terry, and Bill and all of her family and BVM sisters. RIP Eily.

Sharon O'Brien

There are so many memories of Sister Eileen that when I think of how lucky I was, tears come to my eyes. I knew that if I was going to get in trouble she would be right next to me giving me a high five. When she left Nerinx I knew I was going to miss my friend, yet I knew this was the best thing for her. I remember her calling to tell me of the drum she made at a retreat and I could see her smiling face, so proud and kind. I will keep her family and friends in my prayers. Love you.

Patricia Feltz

The news of Eileen's passing was shocking and heartbreaking, but I know she can now smile and laugh again. When I was employed in the office at Nerinx Hall, we looked forward to when she would come in to 'visit' with us. We called her Pearl—long story. Eileen was also a fellow alum of Nerinx. She, Lou Anglin, BVM, and Audrey Juergens, BVM lived up the street from my husband and me for a period of time, and Betsy was a fellow

parishioner, too. Now we have a new saint in Heaven to whom we can pray. Please watch out for us, Pearl. My heart goes out to Lou, the Fuchs family, and her BVM Sisters. The love continues.

Anne Halenkamp Stream

Thank you, Eileen, for dedicating your life to Christ and to our school! Your love and laughter will never be forgotten! I appreciate your kindness in school and being a great '77 classmate. "Thank Heaven for '77!" May God comfort your family through this time.

Janet Csolak, friend and former co-worker

Eileen and I met at Nerinx Hall during the 2000-01 school year. I was returning to the science department after a long hiatus, Eileen had begun in science six months prior, and we hit it off immediately. I have three sisters spread around the country and Eileen became my sister in town. She was a jack-of-all trades for the science department teaching biology, geology, astronomy, anthropology, and was recruited to pioneer the Physics First program with Julie Sutfin. Physics was not her first love, but she did love teaching freshmen and getting them excited about science. She was also instrumental in helping to create the Water Treatment and Transportation Apparatus that the entire science department was involved in competing for the InvenTeams award. Eileen carried on that work long after most of us moved on, driving to a friend's farm to haul manure home to make the apparatus.

I felt honored when Eileen asked me to accompany her to get her head shaved as she was fighting breast cancer, and when we got back to school, the entire student body was wearing hats in support.

When Eileen decided it was time to leave Nerinx to take a more active role in her community, she felt badly leaving me behind at such a critical time. But she was in town when Kevin passed and she rushed to school as soon as she heard the news to comfort me.

I am heartbroken that I have lost such a dear friend and a science geek. She was the soul of our science department, keeping all of us in line, especially Kevin's irreverent nature. We were also Harry Potter geeks, discussing and analyzing the stories again and again. I will miss her dearly, but I will remember her every time I look up at the starry night sky and see her twinkling back at me.

Chris Keefe

This is such a loss. I have known Eileen for many years. She was a great tennis partner. We had so much fun together in our tennis years. Loved spending Halloween with her; she had such joy in it. She always laughed about how she got to go on a honeymoon. (She joined me and some other friends on my honeymoon. It was a great trip). She was a wonderful travel companion and a loyal friend through many, many years. My condolences to her family and her community.

Barbara Klinkhardt

Sister Eileen had been my friend since we first met in 1977 and later worked together at St John's Mercy Medical Center. Always a teacher and always a friend.

Mary Beth Hopfinger

I'm sorry for the loss of Sister Eileen. She was a dear woman and always smiling. She will be missed by her family and BVM sisters. Rest in peace, Eily.

Kathy Flowers

I came to know of Eily when her sister Cece and I taught at St. Alban Roe. She mentioned one time that her sister was in the convent and had searched for the most progressive order she could find. I said, "She's a BVM!" They were very close and she knew Eily was really happy. I did get to meet Eileen a few times and she was so dear. She always made everyone feel so at ease in her presence and her students loved her, too. I'm deeply saddened for your loss, Cece, and your family as well. And of course for the BVMs, too. God has received a very special soul.

Margaret Mary O'Doherty, OP

What a beautiful young woman in a great class about 50 years ago at Little Flower Elementary School remains in my mind as a blessed memory. My prayers and love go out to all the sisters and Eileen's family.

Joy Peterson, PBVM

Please accept my sympathy at Eileen's death. She was a strong woman whose insights and common sense approach to life was a blessing to anyone who knew her. Her car has been parked next to mine in the Applewood garage since she moved in. We often caught up on life standing by our cars and I always enjoyed seeing her there. Now I give her car a love tap as I walk by, sending her loving wishes in her new heavenly home.

Maggie Ryan

Sister Eileen was senior moderator for E2 and I was her buddy for several years at Nerinx. I so loved her spirit and special care for our seniors. Eileen was always so supportive and fun. She participated fully in all the activities at Nerinx and shared her humor and warmth with all of us. I remember so many fun times with her—and serious ones too. Her bravery over her cancer and treatments was inspiring. She supported my work in theatre and also helped me with a trivia night for Insight. (In fact, she actually ran the whole thing for me. I was so thankful.) I pray for her and her community of BVMS and send special hopes and prayers to Sister Lou, her dear friend.

Jean Goschy Wulf

My condolences to Cece, the Fuchs family, and the BVM Sisters. Eileen was a bridesmaid at my wedding back in 1981. She and I were friends from our days at Quincy College. We were in many of the same classes since we both went into medical technology. Comparative Anatomy, Organic Chemistry, Genetics, oh my! We certainly had plenty of study sessions and a few trips to the Tower of Pizza as a stress reliever. I will remember Eileen's laughter and her generous spirit, sharing both her time and talents. I will miss my true and loyal friend.

Lili Huelman

Sister Eileen was one of the best people I knew. She was very kind and supportive when I got sick. She would often come down to the cafe just to ask how I was. I will miss her immensely.

Judie Winters, former coworker

I shared an office with Eileen the entire time she was at Nerinx. Although I taught business and computer subjects, I learned a lot of science from her and the other members of the office because they always had such interesting discussions. Eileen became an important friend to me. She was a great and empathetic listener. She was also good at picking up non-verbal expressions of needing help. Eileen always went above and beyond—she had no limits when it came to helping others. And she also was great at finding fun in everything. She was a blessing to me and to all who knew her.

Patricia Byrne

I just finished watching Eileen's funeral at your Motherhouse. It left me with tears, gratitude, and grief. I can only imagine what this is for you and for your community. How beautiful a memorial to her. It all rang true—the reflections and the liturgy. The Gospel of Jesus washing the feet and "Simple Gifts" at the communion were so apt, so in harmony with her character. The "Pie Jesu" from the Andrew Lloyd Webber's Requiem was a beautiful gift. I was thinking about Eileen at Guest House, how she welcomed me, how generous she was, and how her painful journey bore such fruit, not only for herself, but for the rest of us, too. Certainly for me. That, understandably, was not mentioned at the funeral. Still, it is central for her, and for all of us who have lived it.