



Sharing of Memories of Anne Marie Mullen, BVM (St. Bridget)

Sharing of Memories, Nov. 16, 2020

Joanne Lucid, BVM

A week ago Tuesday, I was thinking of Anne Marie so much. She had come home from the hospital on Monday and we knew that she desired comfort care. That Monday and into the evening and the early hours of the next morning, I just kept being present. She was present to me or I was present to her; I don't know which. Finally, about two o'clock in the morning, I just got up and took one of my favorite coloring pictures, a good one, and on the back of it, I wrote her a letter. I wrote, "Dear Anne Marie, Been thinking of you since you came home from the hospital yesterday. Know that you are loved and that you have loved us in so many kind ways. I relish all the beauty that you added to Nan's Garden. How hard you worked both pulling weeds and rearranging your floral designs so that other flowers would have room and space to grow. I watched you from the patio chair where I often sat especially on Saturday mornings when you were working so hard. Once I invited you to sit down with me and just take some time to admire all your hard work. Well, you did for a few minutes, but then off you scurried because you had other important things to do. And I let you go.

"Thank you for the times that we teamed up together for on-call duty. Your quick smile with dry humor, but again diligence to make sure every sister's concerns were attended to. How I looked forward to the end of the day when you and I would go to Morocco's for a hamburger because we felt we deserved it. But you always brought a new guest who wouldn't have had that opportunity to just go and have a hamburger after a day of duty which, of course, Anne Marie, you did so well.

"I hope my greeting lets you know that we love you and we know that you have loved also. May you listen tonight to the whisperings of God in your ear, hearing how precious you are and safe that you are home with us. We wish we could say this in person, but I know that you understand our circumstances. I am listening along with you from the first floor. You are not alone, Anne Marie, now have a good night."

I wrapped my little letter and put it outside my door to have one of our lovely BCLS (pronounced "buckles") people pick it up in the morning and bring it to her. I thought that somebody would read it to her. Well, it was around eight o'clock that Karen Conover, BVM came by and gently told me that Anne Marie had passed. She had passed while I was writing to her. I know, I just really know in my heart that she knew of our love and appreciation. So good night and now good day, Anne Marie. I feel at peace and I wish her peace.

Bernadette McManigal, BVM

Anne Marie was a strong, intelligent and capable person. Therefore in the last few years when her health forced her to be so dependent and inactive, life was especially difficult for her. I am glad she can now, in her eternal life, return to an active life she loved.

Sharon Rezmer, BVM

My fondest memory of Anne Marie is of her inviting me to the summer home in Salem, Wis. Anne Marie liked to do an annual private retreat there. Before she left, I was telling her that I was requested to write an autobiography for the congregation's files and I was having difficulty even beginning to write. She not only very generously invited me to stay with her for a portion of her week but also encouraged me, talked with me to help form my thoughts, and read and offered suggestions for the autobiography. I knew how precious her retreat time was and I deeply appreciated her kind offer. She was wonderfully supportive and we had a fun time together.

It was there that we shared stories and she told me about her favorite mission—a school for troubled boys out east—her love of dogs, and her love of gardening. When she talked about her missions, I found out that she taught at St. Gregory's School in Chicago and later discovered that she was my brother-in-law's sister Rosemary's teacher in eighth grade. Rosemary had saved a picture of Anne Marie, then Sister Bridget, from her eighth grade school trip to Springfield, Ill., and told me how she enjoyed and admired Sister Bridget and the fun that they had on that trip. Anne Marie also shared with me the chronic illness that she had and in one of those crazy twists of fate, the same disease with which Rosemary was also dealing. I talked with the two of them and they were delighted to meet at Rosemary's condo in Schaumburg. Seeing each other after some 40 years, they talked about the past, caught up with the present, and encouraged each other in dealing with their illness. Rosemary died at the age of 56 not too long after they were reunited.

Joan Beissel McCarthy, former BVM SM St. Agatha

I, as a BVM sister at the time, was missioned with Anne Marie Mullen at St. John's parish in Des Moines, Iowa. In 1962, it was my second year teaching and the first time with first grade. Anne Marie had the second grade across the hall from me. She was the *most* helpful person ever. I couldn't have survived without her guidance. She was so kind and a lot of fun.

Also, as the two youngest sisters in the convent, which was an old house in the parish, we shared a bedroom with a curtain between us. She was delightfully gracious with the conditions. One day she shared with me how much she liked cookies, so much so, that her family name was "Cookie."

Fortunately, four years ago when I was at Mount Carmel, I ran into her in the hallway. We shared a big hug and sat down right there and had a wonderful visit together. I called her Cookie, and she smiled from ear to ear. She surely is resting in peace.

Mary Lou Wetzell, BVM

Anne Marie was a good neighbor. I lived across the hall from her for a number of years in our BVM apartment building on Edmunds Street in Chicago, Ill. She was a helpful person, especially during the time my mother lived with me. I could always count on her in a time of need.

Anne Marie was very handy in the area of house maintenance and took pride in her yard work. I was grateful to have my very own "tech support" person right across the hall, as well. Anne Marie's ability to take apart computers and put them back together always amazed me!

She enjoyed her time volunteering at our neighborhood retirement complex not far from our house called, "Norwood Crossing." Anne Marie was compassionate toward the elderly who lived there, especially helping with the on-site weekly mass that the residents attended in their community room.

One of the funniest things that happened was the night that I found a bat in the house. Anne Marie was the lucky person that I woke up in the middle of the night to catch the bat. Thank goodness, she was a brave one!

Marilyn Haas, BVM Associate

In her later years, my sister [Margaret Haas, BVM] and I were in Chicago and were in Anne Marie's cluster where we learned about her boys in Virginia Beach. She had taken over a school for troubled boys and had very impressive stories about them. While in Virginia Beach she would invite the sisters to come and see her boys and the beautiful city. Unfortunately it snowed an inch and closed down the city. But my sister and I were still able to see the beautiful places and the University.

Kathleen A. Nanfito

Sister Anne Marie (St Bridget) Mullen was a radiant and beautiful sister who cared so deeply for everyone! Her life and her work are truly an inspiration to all of us. I loved her and she will be deeply missed. She was my uncle Jack's sister. We loved the special family times we all shared together. Sending prayers and love to all her family, friends and the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Sister Virginia (Ginny) Heldorfer, OSF

My last visit with Anne Marie was in July when she was suffering quite a bit and was discouraged that her body was not healing the way she thought it ought to. During our many conversations, she often shared her thoughts of Judy Cannatos' *Radical Amazement*, which shaped her spiritual life these past years. Her belief in the Universal Christ led her to be even more grateful for her ministry years. I will miss her, our conversations, and our friendship.

Irene Lukefahr, BVM

My memories of Anne Marie go back 30 years when she and Leslie Hays, BVM were ministering to senior citizens in Nashville, Tenn., and I was involved in parish work in Dalton, Ga. Despite the many miles between us, we managed to get together whenever we could. I came to know Anne Marie as a very caring and very capable woman. She was passionate about whatever ministry she was involved with and dedicated to helping those most in need. Given her long, active life, it was very difficult for Anne Marie not to be able to do many of the things she once had done with great ease.

One of my final conversations with Anne Marie, occurred in early October. I was recruiting sisters to write letters from the Sierra Club, encouraging eligible voters to vote in the November election. I offered to be a "scribe" for sisters who could no longer write, but who could certainly tell others why they were voting. Anne Marie was one of the sisters for whom I was a "scribe." After she dictated what she wanted to say in the letter, she turned to me and said, "Thank you, Irene. For much of my life, I was able to be so involved in many things. Now, I can't seem to do anything. At least now, I feel like I was able to participate in this election process."

Go in peace, Anne Marie. I imagine you will find many ways of getting involved in good works as you find your way around in God's heavenly kin-dom.

Kathleen Mullin, BVM

When two Mullen/Mullin BVMs first met, we discovered our mutual Omaha roots. We had relatives who knew each other. When Anne Marie began high school at St. Cecilia Cathedral [after going to St. Brigid's, staffed by BVMs], I was in the same large building in grade school. The Cathedral schools were staffed by Sinsinawa Dominicans. Through our community years I appreciated contacts with Anne Marie and celebrate her now. Thanks! Kathleen in Moline

Patricia Kerz, BVM

I lived with Anne Marie at St. Bridget's in Omaha, Neb. She was the principal and I was the religion chairperson and fifth grade teacher. We would visit her lovely parents who lived three blocks from the school. She started our Crosstown Cluster here in Chicago, and it is still active today. Anne Marie was an excellent educator, very intelligent, a good thinker, and a caring BVM.

Nancy McCarthy, BVM

What I want to share about Anne Marie is how *very* helpful she was with my computer “problems” when I lived in Oak Park and she was living at Edmunds. She had graciously volunteered to help those in need, but always wanted to wait until we had “more than one little problem” so that her time would be well spent. Many times she spent a day at our house, and shared many stories over lunch. She had great patience and taught me much about the computer. I'm always grateful for Anne Marie when I can now fix *some* of my own problems myself! Thank you!

Emily Rosner, grandniece

Earlier this week my family said goodbye to my Great Aunt Sam (Sister Anne Marie). She lived a rich life, not a life full of things but a life full of community. She loved our family and loved the church. Saying goodbye to Sam has been especially hard. She ended up in the hospital and spent her last days alone, away from her family and friends that she served with for 69 years. I remember being little and thinking she had such a cool life, living in community and getting to serve all over the country. She lived selflessly and it showed. Please wear a mask, wash your hands, and social distance. You never know whose life you might save. RIP Sam, we love you.