



**Eulogy of Sister Jean Marie, BVM**  
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, Feb. 8, 2022

Good morning. It is good to be together to celebrate the life of our Sister Jean Marie Brady.

On March 5, 1933, in Monticello, Iowa, Jean Patricia Marie Brady was welcomed into the world by her parents Joseph and Marie (Crimmins) Brady, and her eight living siblings Marcella, Michael, Catherine, Loretta, Ann, Doris, Alice, and Joseph. The first born, Mary, died as child in 1916. All of the Brady children attended St. Martin School in Cascade, Iowa. Jean Patricia loved sports and played on the girls' basketball team. Throughout her life, she enjoyed watching sports, especially Hawkeye basketball.

When Jean Marie realized the call to religious life, the community of choice was obvious. She commented: "Being taught by the Sisters of Charity from kindergarten through senior year . . . and having two first cousins [Sisters] Salome Phillips and Rita Clare McDonald in the order, it was no accident that . . . it would be the BVM community." Jean Patricia entered the congregation on Sept. 8, 1951, and received the name Jean Marie upon her reception on March 19, 1952. She professed first vows on March 19, 1954, and lived 70 years as a BVM. By 1971, she completed a bachelor's degree in history at Mundelein College and a master's degree in education from Loyola University, both in Chicago.

Jean Marie ministered as an elementary teacher at St. Odilo School in Berwyn, Ill.; Blessed Sacrament and Holy Name in Chicago; St. Patrick in Tama, Iowa; and St. Mary, in Iowa City, Iowa, where she also served as principal. She wrote, "Changes were anticipated before my arrival [at St. Mary's] in the fall of 1967. With the top floor of [the] school not accessible due to fire regulations, either a closure, a merger or a building project was in the offing."

During her 21 years as principal in Iowa City, Jean Marie oversaw the merger of St. Patrick and St. Mary to form the Iowa City Catholic Grade School (ICCGS) and the moving of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades to Regina HS to eliminate overcrowding at the elementary school. She supervised the addition of kindergarten in the morning, an extended kindergarten enrichment program in the afternoon, and a free before- and after-school daycare program, all before any of these became standard practice. She supported a capital campaign to build a new Catholic elementary school and proudly served as the first principal of the new Regina Education Center.

Jean Marie was loved by students, faculty, staff and parents. She was an excellent teacher – tough, but fair – and a good listener. Students frequently could be found in her classroom after school simply enjoying time with her, often with lots of laughter. In a letter to Jean Marie, a former St. Mary/ICCGS student wrote, "Please know that I have grown up and become a productive member of society . . . I joined the US State Department and have lived in Kenya, El Salvador, Jordan, Italy, Pakistan, Mexico [and] Thailand . . . I attribute everything I have done in my life to love from my parents *and* my incredible teachers . . . I am blessed to have had you be such a big part of my life!" Jean Marie also had a profound impact on her colleagues, both teachers and administrators. One of her peers wrote, "I'm in the midst of my 25<sup>th</sup> year as a principal. You were a great mentor for me and I thank you!"

In 1985, Jean Marie received the Presidential Award given by the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) [to those] who are exceptionally talented and dedicated to Catholic Schools." The award states, "Your faithful

contributed services at Regina have been a source of hope and encouragement for those who sacrifice their lives for the moral and academic development of students . . . Thousands of students and parents have been touched by your dedication and interest in Catholic school education.”

After a sabbatical during which she earned a certificate for Religious Studies from the Graduate Theological Union at Berkley, Calif., Jean Marie served as a pastoral associate at St. Peter Parish in Cosgrove, Iowa, and St. Michael Parish in Holbrook, Iowa. At the same time, she greatly enjoyed the experience of working part-time as a receptionist and librarian at the Meardon Law Firm in Iowa City.

In 1990, Jean Marie joined the Office of Educational Services for the Archdiocese of Dubuque as the metropolitan coordinator for the Catholic schools in the Cedar Rapids area. She served in this position for 19 years. In 1998, she received the Educational Partner Award from the Grant Wood Area Education Agency. “Sister Jean believes in collaboration and lives it every day,” said the presenter, “She shows enduring patience, a continuously positive and cheerful attitude, and yet she can be bold and determined when necessary.”

While her many professional accomplishments projected self-confidence, underneath Jean Marie actually felt less certain in the public arena. However, on a personal level, she loved to be surrounded by people, planning many social gatherings, and always enjoying a good time. Jean Marie opened the convent doors to BVMs, other religious sisters, and many women who spent time – no matter a summer, a semester, or a year – studying at the University of Iowa. She endeavored to make everyone feel a part of the Iowa City community. Her sense of humor, kindness, generosity, and welcoming nature were well-known to all and through her hospitality, many treasured friendships were formed.

Jean Marie was blessed to be part of a large family and, being the youngest, she was also blessed with nieces and nephews close to her age. She was fortunate to have ministered many years in Eastern Iowa where the majority of her siblings, nieces and nephews lived, which allowed her to part of family gatherings and special occasions.

Jean Marie also felt blessed to be part of the BVM community. Last September, she celebrated her Diamond Jubilee and afterward conveyed, “Seventy years ago, when I asked for the Charity of the Congregation, I don’t think I knew what that really meant. Seventy years later, I have experienced the kindness, love and support of all of you and I thank you for being part of my journey.” We, too, are grateful that Jean Marie has been a part of our journey.

In today’s responsorial psalm we will sing, “You will show me the path of life, you, my hope and my shelter. In your presence is endless joy, at your side is my home forever.” (Psalm 16). We rejoice that Jean Marie is now home in the Father’s house, in the dwelling place Jesus prepared for her, surrounded by her parents, her siblings, Mary Frances Clarke, all deceased relatives and friends. She who was so welcoming in this life has received a most glorious welcome herself. Enjoy the party, Jean Marie!