



Sharing of Memories of Kathleen Franklin, BVM (Joselle)
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, March 24, 2022

Denise Terry, Niece

This week my mind has been filled with memories of my aunt, Sister Kathleen Franklin (SM Joselle). When I was a kid, she was an athletic and energetic young adult who spent time with me, my brothers, sisters, and cousins. She went with us to a lake, a playground, a carnival, or just ran around the yard at my grandparents' house in Bloomingburg, N.Y. Aunt Kathy was the one who sent me off on a two-wheeler. She ran along next to me, her hand on the seat, and then she let go.

Aunt Kathy entered the convent when I was nine years old, but I saw her whenever she was able to visit family and, as newlyweds in 1969, my husband and I visited the school where she was teaching in Davenport, Iowa. Those were the days when Sister covered all the subject in a room packed with kids. Later, after returning to Long Island, Sister Kathy specialized and was a pioneer in teaching elementary school children how to use computers.

When Sister Kathy retired, she volunteered at RotoCare, a free clinic serving people who immigrated from around the world. In addition, she helped families who sought baptism for their infants. Sister Kathy was able to negotiate the realities of present-day family life in all its variations. She was adaptable and never judgmental. Sister Kathy accepted people without prejudice. She also dedicated time and energy to researching the Franklin and Hally families.

My favorite, more recent memories are from the years when Sister Kathy came with her brother Joe and her sister Loretta to visit my family on Cape Cod. I used to call it Camp Denise-Denise because we followed a schedule that included, for example, an early breakfast, daily mass, a tea and doughnut break, followed by an activity and lunch out. Then there were naps and dinner. Oh, how she loved to swim in the ocean! We ate lobster rolls, did jigsaw puzzles and had so many laughs. We were together the night Sister Simone Campbell spoke at the Democratic National Convention. Aunt Kathy was excited to see Catholic sisters represented.

I have also been able to visit Mount Carmel and meet Sister Mary McCauley, whom my family thanks deeply for keeping us connected to Sister Kathy. We appreciate every BVM sister and all the staff who have cared for Sister Kathy during her physical and mental decline. Hearing that she was smiling and content with her daily life was a balm to all the Franklins.

As the youngest, Sister Kathy was indulged and loved by her five brothers and three sisters. Some of you at Mount Carmel knew my Aunt Dorothy Franklin, SM Robertelle, a whirlwind of brilliance and energy. The older sisters were all strong, vibrant, and inspirational. But in her quiet manner, Aunt Kathy brought special gifts to the world through her teaching, her friendships, her enthusiasms, and her prayers for us all. My siblings, cousins, and I have felt the power of her prayers throughout our lives.

I know she rests in peace because she lived in peace.

Sister Mary McCauley, BVM

What a privilege it is to share a few memories of my friendship with Kathleen Franklin, BVM. Kathleen and I met in the novitiate. She entered our BVM Community in 1955. I entered in 1956. So yes, we experienced some of our initial years together, but we really did not know one another. Then in 1971 we both became part of the St. Thomas the Apostle Elementary School faculty in West Hempstead, N.Y. I served as the principal and Kathleen served as the Director of our Learning Center. Kathleen was made for this role. She was creative, patient, kind, understanding and caring. She truly did all that she could to assist those who came to the resource center from first to eighth grade to have a satisfying, effective and enjoyable learning experience.

I left New York in 1980 and Kathleen remained until 2014. Following the death of her sister Loretta and because Kathleen was evidencing a decline in her mental acuity, Kathleen came to Marian Hall. It was my privilege to welcome her and to journey with her until her death last Thursday. I say I welcomed her but in reality, she was the one who welcomed me and permitted me to journey with her during some of the most challenging, yet grace-filled years of her life. It was during these years that I witnessed how loving and caring Kathleen was to other Sisters. Like all the Franklins, Kathleen had a special sense of humor, a hearty laugh, and a wonderful smile. Even during these last months when there was little recognition or understanding of what was going on around her, if you were able to get Kathleen's attention and said her name, her beautiful eyes would open and a warm smile would appear.

In St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians there is a verse that reminds me of Kathleen. Paul writes: "Therefore, we are not discouraged, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed each day!" (2 Cor. 4:16). This is exactly what happened to Kathy. Her outer self – her keen mind, quick wit, sparkling eyes, artistic flare was wasting away while her inner self was being renewed each day! And it was this renewed person who five of us had the privilege of saying goodbye to on the evening of March 17, but not before we all listened to a verse or two of "I'll Take you Home Again, Kathleen" followed by our final prayer: "The Breastplate of St. Patrick." Thank you, Kathleen, for your presence and ministry in our BVM community.

Sister Ann DeNicolo, BVM

I was blessed to have Kathy as my prayer partner for many years and am grateful for her prayers. I was also blessed to live with her at St. Thomas the Apostle school in New York for several years.

Kathy loved her family and New York where she spent most of her years in ministry. Kathy frequently invited us to spend a day with her sister Loretta at the Franklin family home in Bloomingburg. I still chuckle when I recall first seeing a sign scribbled on the painted bathroom wall. "Please, jiggle the handle after you flush." Kathy was lighthearted, clever, and unsophisticated, obvious traits that she inherited from the Franklin clan.

The students at St. Thomas were delighted that she liked them and was a "New Yahkah" One student remarked to me one day, "I like when 'Sistah Kathy' pronounces the words at our spelling bees because she doesn't have an accent and pronounces the words correctly. The students loved Kathy. She was firm, but good-natured, kind, patient, and understanding. At home in the convent, Kathy was generous in sharing her time and talents with her sisters. She had a wonderful sense of humor. She was clever and quick-witted, but never disrespectful. She enjoyed working on the New York Times crossword and jigsaw puzzles. Anne Marie McKenna and I were working with Kathy one night on a jigsaw puzzle. It was getting late and Kathy announced that she was tired and was going off to bed. On her way out, she said, "I'll give \$5 to the person who puts in the last piece." Anne Marie and I stayed up for another hour or more and completed the puzzle. But we couldn't find the last piece anywhere! In the morning, Kathy was standing and looking at the completed puzzle, and with an innocent smile on her face asked, "Who put in the last piece?" Yes, quiet, gentle Kathy could also be an imp.

A few years ago, when Kathy left her beloved New York and returned to Mount Carmel, she was the same amiable, fun-loving, caring, and kind person that she had always been even though her memory was failing. I will always treasure the last time I visited with her. It was just before COVID. It was at the Sunday night sing-along. I

sat next to her and together we sang the "Golden Oldies," tapping our feet and rocking to the music. Impish Kathy leaned over and whispered to me, "Come on!" Together we stood arm in arm and strutted around the circle enjoying the music, the smiles, and the clapping of the other residents. St. Padre Pio has a saying, "Joy, with peace, is the sister of charity. Serve the Lord with laughter." Thank you, Kathy, for your joy, your peace, and your charity.

Sister Eileen Powell, BVM

Kathy Franklin and I were together as parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Hempstead, NY, and as sisters since 1955 when Kathy entered our community. Our lives crossed many times over the years. Most recently, when my mother was living her last days and I was helping her in New York. Kathy gave herself selflessly to our family. Kathy would come when we needed a caretaker for our mother when we went to family weddings or other special events. Kathy treated such times as gifts to her rather than favors to our family. She extended herself in every way she could. My family and I will continue to be grateful for Kathy's loving presence in love, friendship and caring. She was the last person to speak to our mom before she died.

Sister Dolores (Dee) Myers, BVM

Kathleen Franklin came back to New York to minister in 1971. This was the joy of her life. Now, she could be near her family and the New York Irish culture which she loved so much. Kathleen joined a vibrant community of fifteen BVMs, all who ministered at St. Thomas the Apostle school with over 900 students! Kathleen thrived using her skills as director of the resource center for the entire student body.

Kathleen loved parties and visitors, family or BVM sister's friends, where we could sit around sharing snacks and drinks. She was an observer, carefully listening and flashing her smile, laughing and enjoying other's stories. We had our share of New York Irish priests in the parish, or friends and guests at St. Thomas. Bishop Sullivan was an excellent singer and could belt out "Danny Boy" on cue. However, "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" brought an even wider smile to her face. Kathleen was the quintessential New York/Brooklyn Irish who deeply loved their heritage. All of these big family gathering customs were etched in their very being, including dropping the r's. Kathleen also loved reading and had a warehouse of books which she consumed.

West Hempstead was twenty minutes from the famed Jones Beach. That was not lost on Kathy. Swimming in the ocean gave her vigorous energy. Another joy was driving to Brooklyn to spend time with her Visitation sister Pat. The stunning view of the Verrazano Bridge from Pat's neighborhood gave Kathy another thrill. Often these visits would bring her to BVM Kathleen Newell and Sister of St. Joseph Lorna Colin's home nearby. Kathy enjoyed these two sisters, whose very hearts and souls also beat to the drums of New York and its deeply, engrained, dynamic culture. I can totally understand how difficult it was for Kathy to make her final move to Mount Carmel. It took another New York native, Helen Garvey, rooted in that same culture to navigate and complete this drive to Dubuque.

I sat with Kathleen intermittently on her last St. Patrick's Day. Kathy lay quietly on her bed. Surely, March 17 was the right day for her to join parents, all of her siblings, except Joe, and enjoy the biggest party ever, singing and reminiscing. "Just imagine Kathy" we suggested, "what this would be like!" Eileen Powell, another BVM New Yorker, whom Kathleen loved dearly, and I coaxed her into pure joy, we thought! We even sang "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" and I pretended to be Irish! It looked like Kathy and God had other plans until 7:18 p.m. when Kathy just stopped breathing. You are now HOME, Kathleen.

Sister Bernadette McManigal, BVM

My special memory of Kathleen is her smile. With that smile I felt welcomed. I especially remember visiting New York to attend an event at the school in Bellerose around 1985. Kathleen was the only BVM on Long Island and she went out of her way chauffeuring Helen Garvey and me during that visit, again being generous with her time and always with a smile.

Sister Joanne Lucid, BVM

How our dear Kathleen LOVED her New York! I would love to listen to Kathleen tell me stories of the family vacations each summer when they went further north to the R-relatives place with other cousins. One day, Kathleen even drew a picture of these wonderful days. I believe they lasted most of the summer. When our Helen Garvey had her wake and service, I was able to be with Kathleen during that time. We sat together and she pointed out every member of Helen's family and afterwards spent a lovely time looking at the family pictures. They all knew each other very well.

We had many laughs together about various things as we were both new to Marian Hall living. Her beautiful expressive blue eyes would tell me what she saw and thought and off we would go laughing. Her kindness to all, her thoughtfulness, her love of life and of times of prayer and quiet are gifts that I saw, and she shared. How happy I am for Kathleen as she is reunited with so many family and friends. I believe that she adds to the joy of heaven.

Marilyn Wasmundt, BVM Associate & Robert Kuhn Center Art Teacher

I remember how much fun Kathleen had in my Doodling class at the Roberta Kuhn Center. She always had a story to share with us about every Doodle.

Sister Vicki Smurlo, BVM

My single memory of Kathy Franklin was in May of 1991 when my grandma at age 95 wanted to travel to New York to visit Ellis Island where her passport and Hungarian money were on display. Sister Therese von Holdt and Kathy were the best of hostesses for the duration of our visit. For one of our dinners my Grandma Gree-aash and I fixed a Hungarian chicken goulash for the sisters, and they were quite pleased, obviously! What a joy and privilege to have gracious BVMs in various cities to make us feel like family and show such generous hospitality though we did not know them until that visit.

Sister Kathleen Conway, BVM

I was Congregational Representative when it became clear that it was time for Kathleen to return to Dubuque. She lived with the Dominican sisters on Long Island, and I went to spend a couple of weeks with them to help Kathleen pack up and say goodbye to her beloved New York. While there I got to know not only Kathleen, but her family. Her family members were homey, welcoming and very hospitable as were the six Dominican sisters. They took us out to dinner the night before she left, telling stories which included a lot of laughter. I knew I couldn't drive Kathleen to Dubuque by myself, so Helen Garvey flew out and the three of us had a delightful trip back to Iowa. I especially remember Kathleen as very shy, funny, prayerful and grateful."

Sister Colleen McGinnity, BVM

Kathy was fun to live with. There was an impishness about her. She once walked off with the last piece of a jigsaw puzzle in process and went to bed so she could put in the last piece the next morning. Kathy was quiet, but full of life. She loved her family and generously shared them with all of us, inviting us to travel upstate to be with them. She was an excellent teacher. She worked many years in our multimedia center and the children loved spending time with her.

Sister Bette Gambonini, BVM

I lived with Kathleen for two years at St. Thomas the Apostle in West Hempstead, N.Y., in the early 1980s. She always greeted people with a lovely smile. She and Theresa von Holdt would be found at the kitchen table on Sunday mornings working the New York Times crossword puzzle. Kathleen always entered into parties and fun times with a quiet but enthusiastic spirit. When visiting her many years later at Mount Carmel she still had her beautiful smile and welcoming spirit.

Sister Joellen McCarthy, BVM

Our lives intersected when I worked with Maryknoll, and we were both members of the East Coast Cluster. We were a fairly active and consistent cluster. The majority of us lived in New York but we encompassed persons living in Connecticut, D.C., and Virginia. Because we were so few and felt far from the community, our gathering became an important way to feel connected with the BVM congregation.

I appreciated Kathleen's presence in the group because even in her quiet way she demonstrated her enjoyment of being together. I appreciated getting to know some of her family. One of her sisters would often accompany Kathleen to our cluster meetings and I had the occasion to meet a brother when he visited Nicaragua while I was living there.

Hannah Little Spalding, BVM Associate

Dear Kathleen with her beautiful smile showered cheer on all in the room the day she entered. I remember her back to September 8, 1955, when we first met in the postulancy. How appropriate that Kathleen would leave us for greener realms on St. Patrick's Day.

Sister Margaret McCulloch, BVM & Sister Karen Pollard, BVM

We got to know Kathleen when Jeanne Granville moved to Mount Carmel. They became good friends, did everything together. Kathleen led the way in many adventures. She made sure Jeanne joined activities and watched over her. She became part of Jeanne's family joining in their visits. We are very grateful for Kathleen's love and care for Jeanne.

Sister Margaret Mary Cosgrove, BVM

Kathleen was a good friend of Jeanne Granville. She sometimes overwhelmed Jeanne with her attention, but she genuinely loved Jeanne and wanted to take care of her. I remember Kathleen always had a smile on her face!

Molly, Mount Carmel Volunteer

I was so sad to read of Sister Kathleen's passing but blessed to have spent time with her. I volunteered twice a week with the Sisters of Charity. I spent many mornings coloring with the sisters in the memory care unit. Sister Kathleen always brought warmth and love into the room. I was always smiling and laughing when coloring or talking with her! She was truly a radiant soul inside and out!! Some of my favorite memories are the times I got to spend laughing with the sisters in the memory care unit. May Sister Kathleen rest in peace!

Sister Kathleen Mullin, BVM

Decades ago, my youngest brother Michael moved from Iowa to Manhattan, NY. When poor health caused him to move into a Long Island nursing home, my niece and I would take turns visiting him. On one trip, I stayed with Kathleen at the Dominican convent on Long Island where she then lived. Over the long weekend, Kathleen and I had time to share memories from our youth and about our families. We discussed BVM issues and what the future might hold for religious life, the Church, our nation, and so forth. It was a memorable reunion. Not long after that Kathleen moved back to Dubuque, and I rejoiced in our encounters.