



Sharing of Memories of Catherine Dominck, BVM (Michael Ann)
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, June 16, 2022

Kathleen Sura, Niece

My husband Dennis and I were lucky enough to be able to have an in person visit last August with Catherine. We saw Sister Catherine's "new digs" which were very lovely. When we arrived, she was knitting a winter hat and watching U of I football on TV. Quite a combination! During our visit, she mentioned that she was looking forward to Jubilee #75. On the way out, I noticed the little kitchenette area. I opened the fridge, which was empty and made a comment that it was empty. She quickly responded that that should be something to take care of on our next visit. Sister always had a quick wit.

One of the last things that Catherine did before becoming Sister Mary Michael Anne was stand up in our parents' wedding. (*Kathleen's mother is Catherine's sister Bernadette*). It was her last big family party before leaving for Dubuque. Catherine is on our mother's side in the wedding photo.

I'm sure many of you remember the days when nuns traveled in twos. As a small child, sometimes it was hard to figure out who was who. The headdress was so large that unless you looked straight on, you couldn't see the person's face. I'm glad that's something that changed over time. In a photo I sent, Sister Mary Michael Anne is looking frontwards. For whatever reason, I am looking at the friend.

Sister Catherine also was a mystery solver. A couple of years ago, my sisters and I would tape record her telling stories about the Dominick family. We wanted to hear those stories since our mom had died so young. She spoke of attending our mother's funeral services. She was allowed to attend the wake but not the Mass. So, she became our babysitter! I always wondered who stayed home from the service to attend to us and it was Sister! She babysat three kids, three and under. According to her story, our sister, Mary, took her first steps during that time.

I inherited some dishes from one of Sister Catherine's sisters. Obviously, they were very old, and I thought perhaps they were some precious antiques. As it turns out, movie theaters were giving away those dishes when you bought a ticket. If chores were done on a Saturday and the movie was given the OK by the Catholic paper, Sister Catherine and her siblings could go to see that movie. That explains the uneven set of dishes I received. I think everything depended on how many went to the movie and what was the dish that week. So, as it turns out, the dishes are old, but not so valuable.

Sister Catherine is now happily reunited with her family, both spiritual and corporal. She lived a life of kindness. God bless her.

Maureen Klein Marigliano, Niece

Catherine was my mom Teresa Dominick Klein's sister. I have so many fond memories of Aunt Catherine especially during the holidays. I always thought it was so cool when I was younger to go visit my aunt in "the city" when she in was Cicero.

As an adult, I brought my family to visit Catherine here in Dubuque. My son was about 9 years old, and all the sisters thought he was the cutest thing! Sister Catherine took us on a tour, and she was so excited for us to meet

everyone. We had a delicious lunch in the cafeteria. Catherine never missed sending a card for every holiday and birthday. They are such a treasure to look at. She will be greatly missed!

Debra Tippe Jorgensen, Mount Carmel Volunteer

I love watching Catherine crochet her hats.

Sister Katherine (Katie) Heffernan, BVM

Catherine was my personal pray-er for many years while I was in Chicago, and she was here at the Motherhouse complex. She always remembered me on any happening or occasion and sent me a personal note with an appropriate message, making the occasion a little more special because of her greeting and thoughtfulness in communicating. She always intended to make me one of those "Veteran's" hats. We talked about it, and I learned to make two rows but then our ambition drifted off. We enjoyed having the same first name.

Sister Kate Keating, BVM?

I had the privilege of teaching Catherine how to play poker. That also meant that I kept her supplied with nickels. She would periodically call and say, "I'm out of nickels" or "Would you lend me some for tomorrow night?" We always played Thursday evenings. I would say to her, "Well, what's your collateral?" She would extend her prosthetic leg. She was a fun person to play poker with. Not only did she play it, but she knew how to play better than I did by the end. We'll miss her very much.

Sister Julie O'Neill, BVM

About ten years ago, I was asked to interview sisters named Catherine. We were running a series in one of our publications entitled "Sister Spotlight." Catherine's turn was that month so I went to her room. Those of you who know about her room in Marian Hall, the door was always lovingly decorated according to the season and so was her wheelchair. But when I walked in her room, there was a collection of angels. It was mentioned in the eulogy that she was very fond of her guardian angel. But that fondness went even further. Catherine told me that when she heard someone was very ill and possibly on the way to death, Catherine would ask her own guardian angel to talk that person's guardian angel to make sure that walk was calm and gentle and peaceful. I certainly never thought of giving my guardian angel a job. I remember it so, so well.

Four years ago, Catherine could no longer physically write her letters, so I became her letter writer. We would get together and compose her Christmas letters and other notes. She was really great at writing thank you notes. I am very thankful for the gift of knowing her in that regard.

Sister Janine Wolff, BVM

I lived with Catherine at Holy Cross in Chicago. I don't remember what grade I had, but I know she had second grade. We decided in the spring to take a field trip to the Brookfield Zoo. We had a whole school bus full of second graders. We got off the bus at the First Avenue entry and started through the two gates. They saw all this green and those children, before we could get through the gate, were on their way to the beautiful water fountain in the middle of the zoo. We looked at each other, how are we going to get those 70 kids back? The "leaders" just went around the fountain and came back to us. We had no problem at all with all those children.

Sister Veronica Higgins, BVM

Catherine is a darling woman who I knew for too short of a time. But our time together, indeed, was very special. We talked about spiritual things. I really got to know Catherine while knitting baby hats. Catherine would help us by managing the skeins of yarn that would become the balls we used to make the hats. She was in charge of putting the tops on the baby hats, each one made with love. She was a great storyteller. I would say, "Catherine, can I take you back to your room?" "Yes, you can" Off we would go. Catherine has a place for everything, and everything was in its place. Her closet was exactly the way she wanted it. She had her knitting things in a special place in her room. Around Eastertime, I walked into her room one day with a palm in my hand. She said, "What are you doing with it?" "Oh, it's something I did with my mother when I was a child." We folded the palm into

what we called “the four winds.” I said, “Would you like one of these?” “Oh, yes, I would!” I said, “You will have one.” I got a palm, folded it and gave it to her. She was so touched; it was a mutual experience. I will miss her. I will miss her stories of living, her family, and her life as a BVM.

Sister Karen Conover, BVM

Catherine had been a member of our Carmel Salted Nut cluster for several years, but when COVID made us switch to Zoom, that got too difficult for her, and she dropped out. However, even when we resumed meeting in person earlier this year and offered to bring her over to Bethany to be with us, she declined.

I always found Catherine to be a source of deep wisdom and spiritual insight from her long life of challenge. I never heard her complain about her loss of limb or about all the challenges that were evident as she faithfully walked with a nurse or aide up and down the corridor on 3rd floor Marian Hall or 3rd floor Caritas. She was obviously touched deeply in late 2020 when several sisters in rooms all around her succumbed to COVID.

We all know the wild and lively decorations displayed on her walls and even her wheelchair, all themed to a particular month stored in separate bags. However, in preparation for the “big move” to the new buildings, she was led to believe that these would “no longer be appropriate”, and so month by month, she divested herself of these colorful, treasured symbols of life.

We all remember that she regularly purchased large amounts of chocolates from the candy cart, but these she set out in a big container on a shelf outside her room so that staff and other visitors could take something as they served her or just passed by her door. She loved to be giving. She herself was very careful because of her diabetes.

Sometime in the last two months, I was alerted by one of the Personal Service Assistants in BCLS (BVM Community Life Services) that Catherine was quite “down,” so I stopped in to see her. As usual, she was hooking yarn around the circular frame, making one of the hundreds of hats that she had crafted. During my visit, she said, “I’m useless! I can’t do anything!” I tried to reassure her that her very being was a gift, that her making hats was a big “something”, and that we loved her. Then I took her hand and prayed aloud for her, with her, from my heart, asking God to reassure her of her goodness and her infinite worth and to know our esteem for her as a BVM. I don’t know if that made a difference for Catherine that day, but I am sure that this past Saturday, Catherine experienced a joyful welcome by the God she loved and served. I believe she is now whole and free, walking and skipping with God, and now she knows as never before how much she is treasured.

Sister Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM

Thanks to the ministry of DPOA, I had the gift of spending much of last week at the hospital with Catherine. The predominant memory I will hold from that experience has already been testified to by the stories told today. It has to do with the feeling of being enveloped in kindness.

The first night when Catherine was in the emergency room, one of my favorite memories was how she was so engaged with her care. She wanted to know about every test and the results of every test and what they meant. In between times, a word of advice to me to please tell her poker group that she would not be coming on Thursday. From that night, my most prevailing memory was the emergency doctor who, hours into the evening, bent over Catherine and said, “Would you like me to pray.” She said, “Yes.” I got to witness the most beautiful exchange of prayer. I have to tell you, and I don’t think it was my imagination, something shifted in Catherine at that moment. In the remaining days there was a gradual decline in her energy until Friday night when she just settled into a very peaceful, deep sleep. She died early Saturday morning.

On Saturday morning, several of us representing all her different relationships were there. First, her niece Florence was there. Dr. Ries was there. The attending nurse Lisa was there representing all the nurses who had given care over those days. Mary Martens was there accompanying me when I got called early in the morning. We all held hands and made a circle of friends around her bed. In the middle, there was a bouquet of fresh flowers

that her Council Contact Kate Hendel had brought the day before. We prayed a very simple prayer. Thanked Catherine for being the face of God's kindness that she has been for us and prayed that she would rejoice in seeing the face of God. As we left her room some hours later, I was carrying her prosthetic leg. As I held it, I thought, this is a symbol of all her vulnerability. Then the rest of the thought came. If we are open, vulnerability ushers us into a place of mighty kindness.

Florence Cooney, Niece

We made trips out here every year to see her. She always had treats for us, a bag of goodies. Today I was informed that she already had made up bags because she was expecting us to come this month to visit her. Every Christmas we would always receive a big box from her. When coming here, we would take her out to lunch and go downtown to the huge walkway up and down the river. I think we probably did it three or four times because we would just get her back home in time to have dinner. Those things we are going to miss. They are treasures now that we can never replace. I am so grateful that we were able to do that for quite a number of years. You have said such wonderful things about your experiences with her. It turns her into a different light in my life. Thank you all for everything. I appreciate it all and every one of you; I truly do. God bless you all. You are awesome.s