



Sharing of Memories of Eileen (Patrick Ellen) Healy, BVM
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, Feb. 13, 2026

Maureen Ickes, Niece

Auntie Eileen has always been an integral part of my life. I remember her at Grandma and Poppie's on 26th street in San Francisco wearing the boxed habit and hanging rosaries! Then she had a rounded habit, and then she was into street clothes! I loved Irish step dancing with her at our family functions when she came for visits and enjoyed meeting her companions. The past 20 years have been the most special because she was able to visit and stay with me in San Jose and then Stockton, [Calif]. She was able to get to know all of our children and grandchildren. What a gift and blessing! Such a delightful and easy houseguest. I'm thankful for our special time together, her faith and patience with answering many personal questions, our special talks, and her unconditional love for all of us. As we send you on this sacred journey, we know that you are now celebrating with Grandma, Poppie, Mom, Auntie Ann, Uncle Danny, Patrick Healy, Debbie and so many others in our family. I'm the sure the Irish bread, tea and step dancing are being enjoyed by all. I love you, Auntie Eileen. I so wish I was able to be there. Rest in God's peace. Thank you for your presence in my life. I cried all the way through writing this. It is a huge hole in my heart.

Kathleen Mellard, Niece

First, I want you all to know that, according to stories, I was always called "Baby Kathleen" by Auntie Eileen. She and my cousin Catherine on my Dad's side took me everywhere in the city, first in a buggy, then in a stroller.

After she entered the novitiate, I had the opportunity to come to Mount Carmel with Grandma and Poppie. First thought I always remember is going from Chicago by train. The train went through a car wash! She loved spending time on the top portion of the train to view the countryside. When she got to Dubuque, she was in the backyard of the building and loved the wishing well that was back there.

We also went to Memphis. I remember visiting a cemetery. To top it off, I got the mumps before heading home.

Her eighth-grade class at St. Paul's was going on a bike ride from St. Paul's to Stowe Lake in Golden Gate Park. She was the leader and I was at the end. What a trip – a total of 19 miles.

To wrap this up, I was, and still am, a huge fan of John Denver. Love his music! There was going to be a concert at Cow Palace in San Francisco. So, I took a chance and asked Auntie Eileen and Auntie Ann to go to the concert. They both accepted. What a fun memory to share!

God speed, Auntie Eileen. Love you always.

Sister Mary McCauley, BVM

It was my joy and privilege to know, love and admire Eileen since 1994 when Eileen came to Dubuque to serve our sisters at the Motherhouse. At the same time, she very wisely chose to join Mary Agnes O' Connor and me in the St. Columbkille Apartments. In 1996 we became neighbors, along with La Donna Manternach, in the Circle Apartments. At that time, we made the prudent decision to dine and pray together 4 or 5 nights a week. If you do the math, that means that we have been supportive friends for the last 31 years!

Eileen was Irish to the core. She loved her family and regaled us with stories about her Irish heritage! Oh, how I wish I had known her mother and father, her sisters and brother.

There was no air about Eileen. She was intelligent, compassionate, down-to-earth, filled with common sense, fearless and tangibly committed to justice. She also was a great storyteller. Night after night she shared innumerable stories about her teaching days as well as her years as principal. Much to my amazement she remembered the names of each student and could even tell us where they sat!

As much as Eileen was committed to the ministry of education, I think if we were to ask Eileen to identify her favorite ministry, she would say it was the years she spent at the Motherhouse being present to and serving our BVM Sisters in retirement.

My final comment concerning Eileen would be to say that she also had the gift of being a good friend. She was understanding, generous, supportive, kind and wise. For what more could one ask?

Yes, Eileen, I will miss your presence, yet I am most grateful that you are now cherishing eternal life! I only ask that you continue to love, support, guide, and cherish your family and friends. And oh yes, I do have one final, less erudite, but extremely important comment and that is to say that I am going to miss your Irish soda bread!

Sister Carol Marie Baum, BVM

Eileen's Irish heritage played a major part in her formative years in California and continued to be shared in this Irish community. Her deep faith, love for learning, fair treatment of all she met and great sense of humor were a few of the gifts shared from early on in her life to now. I wish to share a postcard. It came from Ireland and on the card is printed "Eileen is a breath of fresh air, with her vitality and her zest for life. She has a charming and intelligent manner that endears her to friends and associates." Eileen's name fits her well.

In my ten years of ministry at the Motherhouse independent living alongside Eileen, I found her insightful, challenging, humorous and fair when attending various meetings needed for a house to run smoothly. Her work ethic never wavered when at the time of renovating the second and third floor of the Motherhouse to be more user friendly for the sisters living there, she took on the task of relocating the sisters to four different locations throughout the city during the renovation, making sure they had the personal belongings needed for the time they were relocated, directing the actual move and checking in on a regular basis as to their well-being and logistically finding ways to bring them back on campus for various community events. The move was well executed, and the sisters thrived during the months away because of her personal visits during this time.

Eileen's love of reading was a given from early on and she shared this not only with her students but also with her friends. History was one that often attracted her to read more of what was left out of

much of the history books when she was a teacher in the schools and carried into the conversations with sisters and those she interacted with on various social topics.

Her spiritual life was nourished by a range of spiritual writers, cluster conversations, Vatican II, and various prayer experiences within the congregation which continued her lifelong deepening of her relationship with her loving God. This too was shared in conversations along the way.

I would be remiss if I did not find some way to acknowledge her wonderful storytelling ability and great sense of humor which attest to her Irish heritage. Since our Foundress Mary Frances Clarke came from Ireland, St. Patrick's Day holds a special reason for celebrating and would find us enjoying an evening meal in the Caritas Dining room with an Irish fare and the McNally Irish Dancers would be the entertainment. The jig reels performed delighted Eileen as her feet kept time to the music.

She could also make a great Irish coffee, a real treat especially in Dubuque where it is hard to find a good Irish coffee. Her hospitality was given freely, and I was the recipient of her presence in my life. She was my North Star. I was gifted beyond measure by her friendship. God Speed Dear One.

Sister Martha Donnelly, PBVM

I am a Presentation Sister who was privileged to work with Maureen Fury, Eileen, Floria [Shannon], Donard [Collins], Carol Marie [Baum], Mary Agnes [O'Connor]. As you have heard, she was a great storyteller. The one I remember, and I hope I remember this right, was about her Auntie Kit. If I remember right, Eileen gave us a line in one of our presentations to the sisters on confidentiality. I think it was Auntie Kit who was asked by one of her kids, "Why didn't you tell me she was expecting?" Auntie Kit said, "It was not my story to tell." I treasured my time with Eileen. I hope I can continue to emulate her and adopt some of her good, kind, and storytelling ways. It was a privilege to be with her and all of you.

Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM

I taught in St. Paul while Eileen was principal there. A few things have stuck in my mind ever since those days in the 1980s. One is that when there was some grumbling going around in the faculty room about the chaos and noise in a particular fifth-grade classroom, Eileen just looked at everyone and said, "Every child deserves to have a first-year teacher in their career because first-year teachers will do things they will never do again."

Eileen's courage was another thing that really struck me. Eileen began to recognize signs of alcoholism in one of our eighth-grade math teachers. She didn't have anything definite to go on until one day she checked out the tea pot kept in the classroom and discovered that it did not hold tea. She very courageously confronted the woman with the challenge of getting help or quitting. Thankfully, the woman opted for getting help. That's a very courageous thing to do.

As a teacher, I found her help wonderful. I had a child in fourth grade who probably had the emotional level of a kindergartener which made for some very awkward interactions with other children, especially around Christmas time. Eileen was willing to say to his parents that he may not be in school that last week before Christmas. "He may not come back to school until he has seen his pediatrician and he has ruled out any medical cause for this very strange behavior. I want a report from that pediatrician." She was able in talking to the doctor to get the doctor to say, "You must take him to a psychiatrist." She did wonderful follow-through and worked with that family, so the child did get help. That wisdom and courage and good sense of Eileen's have always stayed with me.

Sister Vicki Smurlo, BVM

I had the very distinct privilege of being with Eileen when she took her last breath. In keeping with her concern for others, she knew that Kathy Kandefer was with me and that we would both be comforted and comfortable in seeing her die. It was special.

It was also a privilege and a perk that Eileen's mother had blackberries growing in her backyard along all four sides. I used to tell Eileen that because of this I never want to have naked cereal. And she honored my request.

I will miss Eileen because she was an easy person to be with. I will miss her bike rides. I will miss her slumber parties. Well, we did have one slumber party. We invited her adult nieces to spend the night with us at St Michael's. We were not kids, but we acted like kids. We had a great night.

Eileen precedes me to the heavenly kingdom, but I get to linger longer here to appreciate the life I had with her and the example of her being a good storyteller, one who laughs well. She had the integrity and character of a special, special friend. I will miss you, Eileen.

Sister Ann Cronin, BVM

Eileen had a deep love of her Irish heritage as do I. I'd forgotten the fact that her parents and my parents both came from County Cork. In addition to our parents being from Ireland, our siblings were all born in San Francisco. Eileen would always remind me that her oldest sister Nora and my sister Peggy were in the same class. My sister Eleanor and her sister Ann were in the same class. That same class was twelve years at St. Paul's in San Francisco. Her brother Danny and my brother Danny were in the same class for eight years. Then, because there was no boys' high school, the boys split. Eileen and my brother Johnny were in the same class at St. Paul's. Eileen was eleven years old when I was born. Eileen went up to her mother and says, "Why don't we have a baby to go along with Ann like everybody else in our family?" You can imagine her mother's reaction!

When I was a novice in the 1960s, Eileen came to the Motherhouse with some sisters. I want to say from Cascade. As they were leaving, they had a flat tire. I don't know how I got recruited to look at the tire. So, I looked at the tire and changed the tire and off they went. No big deal since I had changed tires before. Eileen later told me that they stopped at a gas station and asked one of the mechanics to look at the tire to make sure that the novice had put it on correctly. He turned to the sisters and said, "Who put this on?" She said, "One of our novices." He said, "I don't want to mess with her!"

I have wonderful memories of Eileen. I worked with her as co-principal at St. Paul's when she was in the big building and was in the little building. She was great to work with and just a wonderful person. I too will miss her very much.

Sister Marilyn Wilson, BVM

I would like to fill in a few places in Vicki's stories for our six years together. Eileen was a steady, patient, listening presence. When we care about someone who is no longer physically here, her spirit is always present. It is held in gratitude for the times we were present to each other.

The memories of our "formal" time together – 1986-1992 at St. Michael's in San Francisco – included Eileen, LaDonna [Manternach], Anne Marie [McKenna], Vicki [Smurlo], me, and Mary Fuergeson, a Franciscan sister at the time. For the first year we also had two Maryknoll sisters who had been living

there. For a short time, Pat Perko and Bette Gambonini joined us. We had lots and lots of visitors – formation teams, families, relatives, coworkers, and more. Together we prayed and played and cooked and celebrated many occasions – birthdays, graduations, slumber parties, BVM feasts, holidays, jubilees, surgeries, hard times, and healing journeys.

I would like to remember a couple of humorous times. Eileen and I must have been late people because we often end up watching TV together and having conversations. Remember the time we painted the dining room, the chapel – this was mostly Vicki – and sanding the chapel floor with the permission of the pastor, but we did the work. Do you remember the house goals setting we were encouraged to do each September? We were a faithful, intentional community, but we decided to do them at beautiful places, an excuse to get away. We went to the Archdiocesan Retreat Center in Bolinas, Calif., right above the ocean outside the Golden Gate Bridge. We sat in the massive oak tree at Mercy Center in Burlingame, and several times we went to a lone vacation house in Dillon Beach on the north coast. One of the not-so-nice highlights was the earthquake of 1989. Do you remember standing in the doorways on the second floor of St. Michael's scared, worried about everybody else, especially during the aftershocks, and we prayed. Of course, we went out to various places to see what help we could be.

So, Eileen, you were so much a part of very important, though short, time. For all of us, with great gratitude and love to you and your witnessing to what BVM is meant to be in community, thank you.

Jana Streit Ripley, Former Student

So sad to hear of Sister's passing. She was my fifth-grade teacher at St. Cecilia's in Portland, Ore. She was everybody's favorite.

I reconnected with Sister Eileen when Sister Mary Jean Agnes passed several years ago. Of course, I knew her as Sister Patrick Ellen when I was in fifth grade. She wrote back and said, "I do remember who you are. You used to be the blonde who was always talking in fifth grade."

We have been in touch ever since. We even visited her in Dubuque while on a trip in early 2000. We had lunch with Sister Eileen and Sister Anina. Eileen took my husband on a tour of the new building under construction there.

Kevin Carroll, Cousin

"The song is ended, but the memory lingers on." Irving Berlin

Eileen was the last of her generation to be born. Last night, she became the last of her generation to die. Sister Eileen Healy, BVM passed away at the motherhouse of her order in Dubuque, Iowa, at the age of 90.

Eileen was one of my mother's cousins. Her father and my mom's mother were siblings. They were the foundation of a large, Irish-Catholic family in San Francisco.

It took me a while to get to know Eileen. In my early childhood, she had already entered the sisterhood, so she wasn't around much. All I knew of her was gleaned from a photo of her in the living room of her parents' home. I had been told that the photo was of Sister Mary Patrick Ellen. Years later, I

met Sister Eileen Healy. I don't recall how long it took for me to realize that they were the same person.

I will be forever grateful to have known so many from her generation and that of her parents. Growing up knowing extended family members is something I took for granted throughout most of my life. In recent years, having attended the funerals of so many of them, I came to appreciate what a gift it was to have known them.

With Eileen's passing last night, the generation of my parents in our family has come to an end. No longer is there a buffer between us Baby Boomers and death. For some, this might beg the question, "Who's next?" I prefer not to think about this.

I remember my Aunt Lucille. At a number of weddings I attended prior to my own, Lucille would come up to me at some point during the reception, pinch my cheek, and say, "You're next!" I'm sure she meant well, but I never appreciated that exchange. I was tempted, at a few family funerals prior to Lucille's, to walk up to her at the reception, pinch her cheek, and say, "You're next!" I thought better of it. Lucille was too sweet of a person for me to do such a thing.

I don't know what it's like to arrive in Heaven. Hopefully, someday I will. Until such time, I will continue to embrace the images I picked up from hearing my parents and grandparents speaking about the reunion that takes place in Heaven when a loved one dies. According to the lessons I learned, right about now, Eileen is sitting at a table with her parents, her siblings, and a number of other family members enjoying a cup of hot tea, some warm Irish soda bread, and some long overdue conversation.

With Eileen's passing, we are now the elders.

Pamela Sandoval

I remember Sister Eileen who was at St. Paul's Grammar School for my sister and brother's classes in the 70's. She was a very nice teacher and principal who wasn't stuck in the office but would get out and mingle with the kids and always had a gentle smile. My class graduated from St. Paul's Grammar school in 1966.