

Dolores O'Dwyer, BVM (Wilmetta)
Wake Stories/Reflections
Marian Hall Chapel, Dec. 21, 2017

Elissa Hosseinzadeh, Teacher *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

It is with thanksgiving that I was able to have Dolores as part of my life. Her guidance and encouragement brought me great satisfaction in my profession. Her love and care for her friends and students was monumental.

Lorena Walsh *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

I first met Dolores in 1990 when I spoke to the eighth grade class about joining the LAPD Explorer program. We reconnected in 2000 when my boys started kindergarten at St. Bernard School. I got along with her, joked with her, and even called her "girlfriend." She put up with my shenanigans, but I also had a profound respect for her. I want to thank Sister Dolores for touching our lives and giving so much of herself to such a great elementary school for all those years. Her discipline, care and love produced so many outstanding men and women who have gone on to do great things. What a legacy! Two things I will never forget: her love for the Blessed Virgin Mary and her saying, "God bless your day." Rest in peace, Sister. We will never forget you.

Michelle Maga, Sister-in-law of Sister Joan Maga *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

She was such a good friend to this family. We were so blessed to have had her spirited personality and wonderful smile brighten our lives.

John Krajewski, Brother of Mary Lou Krajewski (Sister Joan Maga's Housemate)

(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)

Sister Dolores, or should I say St. Dolores? I can see her chatting it up with her Irish family and friends with Our Lord and Mother Mary."

Johnnie Krajewski, Nephew of Mary Lou Krajewski (Sister Joan Maga's Housemate)

(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)

I will be spending the day celebrating Dolores and the thousands of lives she impacted.

Annette Ordonez, Former Student *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

I was a visitor to her office a few times. She believed in me. She was a wonderful whirlwind force of kindness and caring.

Celso Fueconillo, Jr., Former Student *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

You've scolded me many times while I was at St. Bernard during the 1980s. At least you know now that those life lessons you wanted me to listen to, turns out, I listened and I became one of the successful ones. With love and many memories. Thank you, Sister. Heaven awaits.

Cecilia Cano-Dominguez *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

She was capable of running a corporation. Tough as nails when she had to be, soft as butter in her heart. I'm proud to have known her. She had the highest expectations of all her students, and she was a great supporter of all the athletic teams.

Jackie San Juan, Former Student *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

Sister Dolores was a big part of my life as principal at St. Bernard, both when I attended and again when my children went there. She always gave me "her words of wisdom" that I still treasure today. It wasn't always good memories, but she had her reasons, and for that I respected her and loved her. May you rest in peace Sister—from Skinny Minnie (because that's what she called me).

Denise Jolene Santos-Irvine *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

She was my reading teacher in eighth grade, and I did not like to read. She got all of us "Reading is Fun" trinkets. Since then, I don't mind reading, because reading is fun—thanks to Sister Dolores!

Denise Santiago Jones, Former Student *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

Sister Dolores was a wonderful woman, devoted to her faith, friends and family, a true educator. Most everyone will remember her as the principal of St. Bernard ES. She was not only the principal; she was everyone's biggest supporter. She was always there for CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) athletic events, speech tournaments, academic decathalons, and the list could go on and on.

Sister Dolores was a wonderful friend to the Santiago family, especially my father, Juan Santiago. My parents were honored to share wonderful dinners at the convent and, of course, toasted with Blue Nun.

Sister Dolores faithfully represented the Catholic community. Her commitment to provide a Catholic education to so many of us was truly a gift. Her leadership in Catholic education impressed my husband so much that he converted to Catholicism. She has made a long lasting impact on the lives of the Cano, Santiago, Herrera and Jones families. We are better human beings because of her inspiration and devotion to living life to help others. We honor Sister Dolores and her beautiful life. Her memories will live on in our hearts forever. I know we all have our special stories. Heaven has gained an angel. God bless you, Sister Dolores. May your soul rest in eternal peace.

Sister Mary Jean Ferry, BVM (St. Christopher)

I want all of us to be aware of those in Southern California who are with us in spirit. So many BVM sisters, friends and priests. Sister Joan Maga, Mary Lou Krajewski, and Dolores are witnesses to what friendship is all about. It wasn't Dolores who did it all at St. Bernard by herself. They worked together as a marvelous team. The three of them also enjoyed traveling together. They loved their pets together, their dogs and their cats. They enjoyed trips to Mount Carmel by train two or three times. Today, we honor with them the sisters in Southern

California, the sisters here who enjoyed Dolores' laughter and songs. She couldn't keep from singing. Thank you, Dolores. Thank you for your amazing wonderful life and the way your spirit lives on in so many of us.

Sister Mary McCauley, BVM (Mercedie)

I had the privilege of serving as the letter writer for Dolores O'Dwyer. When given the opportunity to engage in that ministry, you really get to know the person and their friends because we communicate back and forth. Everything that was mentioned in the emails, I certainly heard in various letters over the last four or five years. Everybody so appreciated Dolores' leadership. They appreciated that she was a mentor for them and she did it with firmness and love. What I picked up from all notes I read was such an appreciation for who Dolores' was as person, as leader, as educator, and as friend.

Sister Eileen Healy, BVM (Patrick Ellen)

Dolores didn't always live in Southern California. I lived in Portland for eight years in the late 1950s and early 1960s. For a part of that time, Dolores was there at St. Clare. It is possible that Dolores was the last person alive who lived there at that time. We, the three superiors, believed that since there were only 24 of us in the area, we should get together often. So once a month we met and the conference would rotate. Whenever we gathered, Dolores sang. She claimed, even in those years, to have written the song "For You, St. Paul." Whenever we sang, she was so happy to have someone who also knew the words. So we would sing "For You, St. Paul" at the end of every gathering. I'm not sure how the rest of the group felt—we had all sorts of people in the Northwest at the time—but we always sang that song.

Sister Kate Keating, BVM (St. Wilma)

I had the privilege of working with Dolores one summer. I belonged to the group that was (so-called) educated, so they didn't know what to do with us in the summer. I was sent to Blessed Sacrament to play with the kids there. Dolores was in charge; there were about five of us. We spent the whole time at summer camp with about 100 African American kids. That was the first time I was introduced to the African American community. Dolores was right there with us, doing whatever made the kids happy. Often when I would bring communion up to Caritas fourth floor, I would whisper in her ear that I remember that summer and how good she was to us.

Sister Mary Ann Cronin, BVM

I don't have many memories of Dolores as an adult other than the fact she lived in Southern California when I did. I grew up across the street from the O'Dwyers. When I think about Dolores and her love of singing, I'm surprised that we don't have the song, "How Can I Keep from Singing?" in her liturgy. She was always into music, as was her father. Her father had a violin. When he played it, we could hear it all over the neighborhood. Music was deeply rooted in who she was as a person. One other thing as an aside. Practically all of the black and white photographs of my family were taken in front the O'Dwyer house. I don't know if that was because of the position of the sun or something else, but almost every picture of my older

brothers and sisters, and my mom and dad hugging me as a little person, were all taken in front of the O'Dwyer house.

Sister Anita Therese Hayes, BVM

Talking about Dolores' father, honestly, she could tell one story after another. She talked about him singing. We'd ask, "Did he dance or tap?" "Well, that's right," she answered. She had one story after another. Whether or not they were true, it was great to hear them. Dolores and I were in the same set. I first met her in 1941, when this group of eight young women came from California. That was a big, big day! Eight! More than what came from St. Mary or The Immaculata in Chicago! They traveled all the way from California on the train and had a great time. They stopped in Omaha and picked up Loretta (Dolly) Larkin, who was SM Amata. We grouped together as the Set of 1941.

We were a very happy, joyful and often-in-trouble set. We had a lot of fun and stayed together for all these years. Every year we sent a letter around at Christmas time. A while ago when there were fewer of us left, we decided to get together every Friday for breakfast. After all, our set was getting smaller and we'd better keep together. I would get Dolores and bring her down to the rest and we would have a great time chatting over everything. Some of the things we discussed, you would never believe! However, we had a great time with Dolores entertaining us with unbelievable stories.

There was one thing I always remembered and I kept reminding her about it. She would never eat prunes unless they had cream on them because that's the way her mother served them. Our group keeps getting smaller and smaller. There was Gracita Daly and then Gracita went to God. Then there were just three of us: Monica Lowry, Dolores O'Dwyer and myself. Dolores always sang; she'd never stop. Some of the tunes I never heard before, but her favorite was that last verse of "Amazing Grace." She would keep singing and singing and I would say, "Shhh, shhh. People are sleeping." That didn't make any difference. She would go right on with the song. Dolores, that's the way I feel now. We can just go on with "no less days to sing God's praise than when we've just begun." I know that you have the whole set up there just singing away. God bless you! Love much, Anita.

Sister Mary Martens, BVM (Loras)

I lived in Southern California in St. Bernard convent in the early 1970s. I was at Our Lady of Loretto HS with several other people from the convent when Dolores was principal at St. Bernard. My best memory of Dolores is simply the hospitality she always exuded whether it was in the house or at the school hall. The school hall was always available for BVMs in Southern California to meet, especially when I was Regional and lived in the Glendale area.

With pleasure, I listened to the comments that came from the St. Bernard students and teachers and the memories of Anita Therese. Her Irish hospitality! Always there was food and welcome. At Christmas time, we would make sweet bread to take to our families when several of us went home to Chicago. I went home always with a loaf of the sweet bread. Sister Marguerite Murphy and Dolores stand out as the ones who got that started. It was a very

diverse house with high school and grade school BVMs and a wonderful spirit among all of us always.

Sister M. Jeroma Day, BVM

Although I knew Dolores when I lived in Southern California, I really got to know her since I've been here and she has been a resident on fourth floor Caritas. As many of you know, every Friday night we have a sing-a-long on fourth floor. Jolene Clauer from Activities is just marvelous with each sister. She knows everything you would want to know about the individual. She dedicates a song to each one. Would you be surprised to know that the one we sang almost every Friday for Dolores was, "When Irish Eyes are Smiling?" I would invite you to join Sister Karen Conover as the lead singer in honoring Dolores one more time with, "When Irish Eyes are Smiling."

When Irish eyes are smiling
Sure, 'tis like the morn in Spring
In the lilt of Irish laughter
You can hear the angels sing
When Irish hearts are happy
All the world seems bright and gay
And when Irish eyes are smiling
Sure, they steal your heart away

Of course, Dolores' Irish eyes are stealing God's heart away.

Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM

Since I am the person who chose not to sing, "How Can I Keep from Singing?" today, I feel like I owe you an explanation. There is a very down side to that song. It focuses on that we keep from singing because of all the grief in our lives. I look for much more upbeat songs; songs you could possibly dance to like "Sing to the Mountains" and "Sing with All the Saints in Glory." I'm sorry if you are disappointed, but the feeling just wasn't right for today and for Dolores' great smile.