

Sister Anne Marie Dolan, BVM (Cyrilita)
Wake Stories/Reflections
Marian Hall Chapel, Dec. 1, 2017

Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM

I will begin by summarizing a variety of comments that were sent by the Sets of 1963, 1964 and 1965. These women expressed their regret at not being here to share this day in person, the influence of Sister Mary Cyrilita on their young lives, the gift she was and the gifts she gave, her faithfulness to God's work, and their prayer today for her family and community. I think all Guadalupe novices would identify with one comment in particular from Shelly Burris: "We were certainly a unique little group in a unique setting, which propelled all of us into our future lives."

Sister Katherine Keating, BVM

I worked with Anne Marie for over 10 years at Cathedral HS. We were the extremes. She was kind, gentle, a counselor to the high school students. I was a disciplinarian. However, we got along well together; we always came to a common ground because we knew we were working for the kids. The second point of extremes is that she was a Chicago White Sox fan and I was a Chicago Cubs fan, so you know how that went! The one thing we really had in common was our Irish heritage. She loved talking about the Irish. The last time I talked with her, she was sitting in her room when I walked by. She said, "Kate, I need to go to God. Will you pray with me?" I said, "No way! He'd take the wrong one!" She smiled at that.

Sister Margaret Mear, BVM

I was her postulant back in 1963. She gave us wonderful, practical advice like don't ever think that you are going to be any holier than your mother because religious life is a lot easier than married life. She said that if a superior says, "Good morning" to you, don't spend the rest of the day thinking "*What did she mean by that?*" She said to be like little children and don't think about sex.

Sister Catherine (Kate) Hendel, BVM (Read by Sister Regina M. Qualls, BVM)

I had the privilege of having Anne Marie as both postulant and novice mistress. From the first day when she greeted us in Mother Clarke's parlor to the day she sent us off from Guadalupe, she nurtured God's call in each of us. Sharing her great love of Mary Frances Clarke, she challenged us to be community women and to live as St. Paul bid us last weekend: "Be all to all." While some of our shenanigans as postulants and novices required a firm hand, she was always mentoring us for the days ahead when we would live on the mission. She never asked us to do anything she didn't do herself. Most importantly, as one of our former set members recalled, she taught us how to more deeply love and trust in God. Anne Marie, whenever we visited you, your eyes would light up, you shared stories and reminded us that you loved us and never failed to tell us how proud you were. Today our eyes light up and, through the mist of loss, we say thank you for your faithful, loving support. We are proud of you and love you back.

Sister Regina M. Qualls, BVM

Ever since the novitiate, Anne Marie was my go-to person. I went to her when I needed advice, when I needed special prayers, or when I just needed a listening heart. When I would ask for prayers for something, she would say, "Well, let me think. Should I go Blessed Mother? No, the Sacred Heart might be good for this or" Then she would think of a saint. She always took great care, and then she would make a decision and say, "OK, I'll take this to the Sacred Heart. Don't worry about it." One day I went over to visit her and she was very upset about something. She just needed to get it out of her system. I sat there quietly listening and letting her talk. She stopped, looked at me and said, "Well, look

at you sitting there so quietly with your hands in your lap." Then her eyes twinkled and she said, "You must have had a wonderful novice mistress." Indeed, we did.

Sister Margaret Mary Cosgrove, BVM

I also was one of Anne Marie's novices. We had a very, very small group by the time I was a senior novice. I think there were about 13 or 15 of us. One of the most wonderful things we did was as a group we went to Southern California. Our novitiate was in Northern California. We drove down in two or three cars with the purpose of visiting the schools in Southern California because none of them had ever seen novices.

But before we got to the schools, we spent three days at the beach. Anne Marie had a good friend, Sister Luiselle Brennan, who had a friend with a beach house. This was June of 1967 so we were still in the full habit with our white veils. Before we went, some in our set who could sew, I am not one of them, went to buy fabric to make moo-moos for us to wear while we were at the beach. We didn't have anything but these moo-moos and swimming suits so we spent a lot of time in them. Anne Marie was so afraid somebody was going to find out we were sisters. When people came around, we were running into the beach house. It was funny.

Then one day, Sister Luiselle came down with all the sisters from Santa Barbara. Anne Marie was in a panic, but they said, "We do this all the time when we come here." There was so much change going on in the church and in the congregation at that time. She taught us to hang onto the values of who we are as BVMs. Another one of her gifts: She thought all of us walked on water. If you had a bad day, all you had to do was walk by her room. Her love was so encompassing that whatever happened that day didn't matter any longer. She was a true gift to each of us.

Armand (Joe) Andreoni, Nephew

Going by the prayer board as we were entering the chapel, I recalled Anne Marie referencing it and posting prayers for our family on it every time I talked with her. She really was a person of prayer, concern and interest in everyone in our family. That's the great thing about Anne Marie. She really cared about the individual and wanted to know about what each person was doing and how they were doing and to remember them in her prayers.

I want to offer one example of how in a quiet way she influenced our lives. We used to belong to St. Athanasius parish in Evanston, Ill. At the time, the pastor, Father Bill Mannion, officiated at two first communions for our children. It so happened that Aunt Marie had prepared Father Mannion for his first communion. He looked for Aunt Marie in the church. We thought she should be with us in the first pew, but since we were restricted in the number of seats, when she came in, she was seated in the very last pew. Father Mannion started his homily and asked Sister Anne Marie to stand up. The entire church turned around. We could see Anne Marie stand up very slowly because she was very humble. He related to the church how she had prepared him for first communion and the impression she made on him. It's a memory we will always have with us and an example of how she influenced so many lives.

Sister Bernadette McManigal, BVM

Speaking of the Mannion family, I have to tell you that some of that family moved out to Virginia. At that time, I was in the school office. Mr. Mannion did not like a decision that I made for the schools, so he asked me, "Do you know Sister Mary Cyrilita? She's now Sister Anne Marie." I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, she was a good BVM."

Sister Alice Marie Dunphy, BVM

I became a friend of Annie's when she moved here from Wright Hall. She ended up in the room right across from me. From then on, we became buddies. I helped her unpack; I put her things together and straightened out her room. We shared a lot. For the last week of her life, I spent every day with her. I loved Annie and I miss Annie. I came to her room on the Sunday before she died. She was dressed in a green blouse and tan skirt. She said, "I can't put socks on because my legs are too swollen." I said, "Annie, where are you going?" She said, "I don't know." "Maybe they are going to take you to Mass." She said, "No, I think I'm dying." "Annie, why are you saying that?" "I know I'm dying. I'm not afraid to die, but the unknown is a little scary. Alice, will you go with me?" "I don't think so, Anne," I said. "It's not my time."

She was suffering so much; it was very difficult for me to watch it. Her hands and legs would shake. A nurse told me that it was the pain. I spent every day with her and some days seven hours. On the day she died, the Sunday of the following week, her nephew Jim was there. I got to know Jim pretty well. We talked about Annie and her life. It was difficult because Annie shook so much; she was in a lot of pain. The nurse told me, "Don't worry. Keep on talking, she can hear you." The last few minutes of her life, Irene Lukefahr, Maureen Patrice Fury, Jim and I were in the room. Her eyes were shut, but we knew she heard us by the way she squeezed my hand so hard. We prayed and prayed every prayer that she knew, but there was something bothering her.

Then Maureen Patrice, smart lady that she is, said, "We should renew her vows with her. We can say them and she will hear us." We said them and she heard them. As we neared the end of the vows, she stopped shaking and stopped making that gurgling sound and got very quiet. She died at the last word of our final vow. She waited for that. I thank Maureen for that and I learned a lesson. I will say the vows for anybody when I'm in their room because that is the finality of it all. It's when Annie died. Afterwards we couldn't separate our hands; they were stuck. Her hand left an imprint on my hand and mine on hers. I will never forget that. Annie was a very holy, caring, loving woman. I miss her a lot and I told her that when I went up and kissed her goodbye. We are among a saint—Annie Dolan.

Paulette Whelan Bolton, Former BVM

I entered in 1963. My set called ourselves the Seventy-Six Trombones. Our postulate was at Mount Carmel and Sister was our postulant mistress, novice mistress, and lifelong friend. She is the godmother of one of my children. God blessed her with so many wonderful gifts and she shared them with every person whose life she touched. Being Irish was so important to her as it was to me. She always said the Irish were very special in God's eyes. We would say, "Well, everybody is." She would say, "Yes, but the Irish are *very* special."

Our ball teams were different. I was a Cubs fan. She would just shake her head like poor me, until last year. She stayed with our family through thick and thin, through very many difficult days. She was always positive and hopeful. She put all of her faith and trust in God and emanated that to others, along with the love the Lord has for each one of us.

At Guadalupe, she allowed us to break a few rules occasionally. Some of us would go to the chapel very late at night, past 9 o'clock, when we really weren't supposed to do so. We confessed that to her. Sister would say, "That's fine. There will be desert times in your life. This will be a special memory for you that you spent the time with the Lord." I taught at Cathedral with her for many years. She was responsible for getting me the job. There is just nothing more to be said about her except what Sister previously said, that she really was and is a saint in God's eyes.

Sister Teri Hadro, BVM

Ann Marie lived a life of loving service to God's people and to our congregation. Part of her legacy to us lives on in the loving congregational services provided by the BVMs she mentored as novices: Margaret Mary Cosgrove, former treasurer and Community Board delegate; Kathy Carr, former initial membership coordinator; Karen Conover, Mount Carmel Support Services and music ministry; Kate Hendel, former vice president and currently Secretary of the congregation; Anne Marie McKenna, liturgical and music ministry and Stewardship Committee; Regina Qualls, former Secretary of the congregation. Anne Marie's legacy of service to BVMs and God's people lives on.

Mary Ellen Stanley, Cousin

I am a second cousin to Anne Marie. My husband and I visited her many times. Even when she was living at the Cathedral, she and Sister Patricia O'Rourke, my husband, and I would go out to dinner or for breakfast. She was a very special lady. She was a very humble lady.

I would like to share a story that she shared with me about two months ago. We were talking on the phone and she said something about her brother Cyril. "You know, when he was born, I didn't know he was coming. In those days, things were kept quiet. I was five, my sister was three, and all of the sudden, I heard a baby crying. I got out of my bed, went to my sister and said, 'There's a baby in the house.' That's how we found out that Cyril had come."

Then she said, "There was a lady who helped my mother for several weeks. That lady made me wash diapers. Mary Ellen, I was only five years old." I said, "Really?" "Yes," she said, "she made me wash them more than once." I said, "Well, that was the problem." She said, "What?" I said, "You did a good job." She was very special and Dan and I will miss her.

Lucinda Turnis, Mount Carmel Nursing Department

As many of have testified, you never knew what Anne Marie was going to say. She was fun. Being in the nursing department, you get to see the sisters at their finest. She was always at her finest in her little PJs and nightcap. What also came out of her mouth was much love and kindness every day. I think I speak for many of the nursing staff that she was always very concerned about our families, our lives, what we had going on. She always let us know that she was praying for us. She personally helped me through a couple of tough times too. I thank her family for sharing Anne Marie with us, with not only the community, but also the laypeople who had the chance to be with her and around her. She was a very, very precious soul.

Sister Irene Lukefahr, BVM

After Anne Marie passed on her postulants from the Set of 1963, she inherited the Set of 1964 who had made vows on Feb. 2. At that time, there were about 87 of us. I think we were a real challenge for Anne Marie. Over the last 4 1/2 years, every time I talked with Anne Marie, she was always affirming.

However, when we were newly professed sisters living with her, she was not always pleased with us. Those were the times when there were many liturgical changes. We heard about the Sign of Peace starting in the parishes. Someone in our set decided that we should start the Sign of Peace in the Motherhouse, which we did. We disappointed Anne Marie quite a bit. She scolded us and said, "How dare you newly professed sisters initiate that liturgical change. That should come from the Mother General."

Several weeks later, many of us moved to the Scholasticate in Chicago. The first Mass we had there was presided over by a Jesuit. At the appropriate time, the Jesuit said, "Let's turn to each other and offer the Sign of Peace." We didn't do it because we remembered when we were scolded for doing it two weeks earlier. I agree with everyone who said how kind and affirming Anne Marie was. It was a privilege to know and love her.

Cheryl Gross, Friend & Former BVM

I've known Anne Marie for over 60 years. I was in elementary school at Gesu in Milwaukee. When I heard that she was going to Guadalupe, I rejoiced with her because I had signed my papers to enter the BVMs. What I remember is her laughter and her encouragement to always be who you are. "If you don't know, I'll help you to know who you are." Looking in her eyes, you knew you better shape up and go do it. I talked with Anne Marie just a couple of weeks ago and assured her that all the Gesu students who I keep in contact with were praying for her and that we loved her. That's when she started crying and I started crying. She was a great friend; she always will be. She will keep us strong. My family loved her and she loved my family.