

Sister Marian Daniel, CSC

(Florence Mary Creamer)

May 15, 1930–July 10, 2023

These memories were lovingly prepared and written by Sister Suzanne Patterson, CSC, who read them at Sister Marian Daniel’s funeral on July 21, 2023.

In the Old Testament book of Daniel, a heavenly messenger addresses him: “You man of great desires, beloved, be comforted, be strong” (Daniel 10:19). These words might well have been addressed to Sister Marian Daniel, who was indeed a woman of great desires who wished to serve the Lord throughout her life. She carried her father’s name with honor and commitment.

The word her family used to describe their “Aunt Sis” was “strong.” There is abundant evidence that strength was indeed her hallmark. Her niece, Janet Chao, shared that poor health plagued Sister throughout her life. Marian’s sister, Eileen, recounts that Sis missed all of first grade and had to repeat the class the next year. At the end of that year, the doctor told her parents that he didn’t think Sis would live to eighth grade graduation.

Eileen remembers that their parents sat down with Sis and told her what the doctor had said. Then their father looked at her and said, “You *will* live.” And so, she did as her father told her, although illness did keep her from attending graduation ceremonies for eighth grade, high school and college. During her 93 years, Marian recovered from any number of illnesses including scarlet fever as an older child and cancer four times as an adult. Marian took everything in her stride, whether it was a health issue or a ministry assignment.

Sister Ruth Marie Nickerson, CSC, gave us a key into Marian's personality when she observed, "I remember her presence more than actual events." Ruth's words ring true. There are many stories about Sister Marian Daniel, but in fact it was her steady presence and attention to others that endeared her to all.

Ruth also wrote: "My first year at The Academy of the Holy Cross when we were brand new, we soon figured out Sister Marian Daniel, too, was young, fresh out of Saint Mary's — the fact she did not wear the silver heart was a dead giveaway! After school while waiting for rides home, students would gather in her homeroom and carry on. We always felt welcome as she sat at her desk trying to do her work. But we knew she was listening!

"When I was thinking about entering the convent after high school, I remember getting up enough nerve to talk with her. She listened to me, encouraged me and walked with me. As she sent me off, she gave me an image of the Holy Spirit. To this day I keep it in my room. She was my Black Veil!" Interestingly, Sister Marian Daniel wrote: "Devotion to the Holy Spirit was instilled in us in our early grade school years and gets called to the fore often." We can understand why she would give a symbol of the Spirit to Ruth to carry with her into religious life.

Sister Sharon Ann Mihm, CSC, tells a similar story. "Sister Marian Daniel is very dear to me as she is my Black Veil! I got to know her in a very special way when I was at The Academy of the Holy Cross. She was a terrific teacher—always kind and thoughtful, with a good sense of humor. She listened attentively when, as a senior, I would ask her questions about entering the community at Saint Mary's."

Eileen Richards recalls the day Sis told the family that she was going to enter the Sisters of the Holy Cross. At her request, the family gathered together, and Marian informed them that she would be going to the convent. No one said anything, so Marian asked her dad, "Do you have anything to say?" His response was, "Yes, Sis, you chose the

hottest day of the summer to tell us!” We can see that Marian came by her quick wit and dry humor naturally.

Any student that Sister Marian Daniel could help, she would. Sister Brenda Cousins, CSC, wrote, “Sister tutored my brother, Neil, one summer. Somehow our father shared with Sister Marian Daniel that my brother might not graduate from high school because he had such difficulty with math. She offered to help him. He was very faithful, going to her for one-on-one tutoring during the summer. He eventually did well enough to pass with her kind and gentle help. Since then, every time Marian and I met, her first question to me was, ‘And how is your brother Neil?’ She loved following his life story. It was always a special connection we had.”

In the 1950s, travel was often a “family affair,” as sisters needed rides and friends and family provided transportation. Sister Paula Goettelmann, CSC, recalls that her dad brought her to school in the morning and then gave Sister Marian Daniel a ride to Catholic University, where Sister was studying. Sister Ruth Marie’s dad helped out in the afternoon, giving Sister a ride home.

Sister M. Jean Ann (Smith), CSC, shared a story from the 1970s, when, you might recall, gasoline was in short supply. She said, “There were long lines at the gas pumps and Americans devised ways and schedules to accommodate their ‘filling up.’ We at The Academy of the Holy Cross in Kensington, Maryland, were no exception. There were several vehicles and scheduled partners who kept cars in readiness. Sister Marian Daniel and I were paired up and ‘on the job,’ we were! We would be on the road by 6 a.m. and head up Rockville Pike to our usual filling station, praying the “Memorare,” her favorite prayer, continuously until we were on our way home with a full tank.”

Sister Theresa Diane Streif, CSC, shared that Sister Marian Daniel did marvelous work while she was in the Finance Office. She set up procedures and systems that were used for years. Sister was always

supportive and kind to those who came for help with their accounts. When a sister would say, 'I am so sorry to have bothered you or to have taken up so much time,' Sister Marian Daniel would just smile and say: 'I could write a book and you wouldn't be in it!'"

This same dry humor was characteristic of Sister Marian Daniel. Linda Diltz recalls that once she asked her how she was doing and Sister matter-of-factly replied, "I'm still taking nourishment."

Both staff and sisters observed that Sister Marian Daniel was even tempered, kind and had a good sense of humor. She always wanted to be on time. In her heyday she never missed an activity or program offered to the sisters. If it was going on, Sister Marian Daniel was there!

Care partners Doralyn Lenoir and Therese Mukasharangabo commented that every afternoon Sister would go to pray her rosary by the little shrine in the community room where there was a statue of Our Lady. Now there is a picture of Sister Marian Daniel by that statue. She also faithfully prayed the Mass via EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network), every evening at 7 p.m.

In addition to her prayer life, Sister Marian Daniel was deeply interested in the world at large, keeping up on national and international news. For years at Saint Mary's, she had a subscription to the news magazine, *The Week*, and read it faithfully. She kept the world in her prayers.

Online, we read tributes from her former Saint Mary's Academy students. One recounted that, "In my first year at Saint Mary's, Sister Marian Daniel told her third-year math class that we would all take the math achievement SAT. Since math at that time wasn't an academy strength, there was general disbelief. In fact, not only did we take the test, the results were particularly good. She was a teacher who believed in her students when we didn't believe in ourselves."

Other students shared: “How sad! She was a great Principal (1968–1972) while I was at SMA” and “Sister Marian Daniel was so kind to me in my junior year when my mother was ill and had multiple surgeries. Rest in Peace.”

Yes, dear Sister, may you enjoy your heavenly home with all those whom you love and cherish. We will miss you.