

Sister Marietta Umlor, CSC

(Sister M. Auberta)

February 18, 1943–August 19, 2021

These memories were lovingly prepared and written by Sister Patricia McCabe, CSC, who read them at Sister Marietta Umlor's funeral on September 2, 2021.

It is a privilege for me to share some highlights of the life of my dear friend, Sister Marietta Umlor. I will just skip over the mountaintops of her life.

I would like to express my sympathy and that of the Sisters of the Holy Cross to Marietta's family, especially her beloved sister, Kay, who is with us here today, and to Debbie Umlor, also with us, Marietta's sister-in-law, who was married to Marietta's brother, Rich, the youngest, who died two years ago. And to the parish family of St. Michael in Orland Park, near Chicago, who are represented today by Mary Jaroz, Cee Cee Van Hecke and Father Ed McLoughlin, who hired Marietta 34 years ago. Marietta used to love to tell the story that when Cee Cee came to interview for the position of Marietta's secretary, she happened to mention that she had the Sisters of the Holy Cross at Blessed Sacrament, Chevy Chase, Maryland, for grade school, The Academy of the Holy Cross, Kensington, Maryland, for high school, and Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana. Marietta never asked if she had any skills but said immediately, "You're hired!"

Patsy Phelan, the former Sister Helen Mary, CSC, was Marietta's first principal and superior when she taught junior high school in Danville, Illinois. They became lifelong friends.

Marietta entered from Most Holy Redeemer Parish in Evergreen Park, Illinois, after Sister Maryanne O'Neill, CSC, and Sister Joan Mader, CSC, but before Sister Geraldine Hoyler, CSC. She told me that she and Joan Mader used to talk about becoming Holy Cross sisters even when they were little girls in elementary school.

I first met Marietta when we were both 17 years old when we walked in the front door of the Sisters of the Holy Cross on September 4, 1960, over 60 years ago, and now I had the honor of living with Marietta in community at the very end of her life. Even our first assignment as postulants was as candle bearers for funerals and special feasts since we were about the same height. This meant that we had to process in front of the higher-ups, our General Council, when we got to church and, of course, perfect Marietta had a spotless cape and perfectly creased habit while I was trying to make sure that I was somewhat presentable.

Marietta really loved her family and was so devoted to her many nieces and nephews and all the great and great-great nieces and nephews. Their pictures are all over our house.

She had so many, many friends at St. Michael and she especially loved her bereavement ministry. People used to ask her, "How can you deal with so much sickness and death?" And she would just say, "It's a gift I have for listening, and I have a compassionate heart, and I know how vulnerable families are at these times and how much support they need." She really loved being with families, doing the wakes, and being present at all the funerals.

Marietta really had a ministry of writing cards, too ... birthdays, sickness, death, thank you, new home. You name it and she was there with a card. I used to say, "Marietta, you must spend a fortune on stamps." And she would say, "I'd rather spend my personal budget on others."

She loved little children, always stopping on the way out of church or on the way out of a restaurant to admire or talk to a little baby or toddler and to tell the parents how cute they were.

She loved her Italian roots and was named after her Italian grandmother, Marietta, who along with Marietta's mother helped to raise the little Umlor family after the death of her father at a young age. She said her grandmother made the best pasta and would always be saying, "Manja, Manja." She had the Italian love of music and dance and loved to celebrate. Cee Cee Van Hecke posted a YouTube video of

Marietta dancing the Charleston with Cee Cee's husband, Buzz, at their 50th wedding anniversary. I think this will be my favorite memory of Marietta ... filled with so much life and joy.

Marietta was a seeker and she valued growing in her spirituality. She was a member of our Theological Reflection Group, which has been meeting for 20 years, and our Evolutionary Consciousness Group, which has been connecting with conference calls about every eight weeks for about 10 years. A number of us were able to go to Le Mans, France, to participate in the spirituality institute and to look at our Holy Cross roots, an experience we all treasured.

Marietta had just a few ministry assignments, spending 49 years in the Chicago area, a few years in Danville, and even though her time in Elkhart, Indiana, was short, she made another lifelong friend in Sister M. Lorraine (Black), CSC, who was her principal and superior. She served with Sister M. Rose Edward (Goodrow), CSC, as a councilor of the Angela Area and loved sharing her grief group skills with our sisters.

Marietta and I, and our band mates here, celebrated our 25th and 50th jubilees together. She was a woman of prayer who loved God, her family, and her religious community and was at her best in serving God's people.

We will miss her kind ways and gentle smile. We love you, Marietta, and we thank God for the gift of your life.