



**Eulogy of Sister Ann (St. Remi) Harrington, BVM
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, Jan. 7, 2025**

Good afternoon. It is good to be together to celebrate the life of our Sister Ann Harrington.

Ann Mary Harrington was born July 15, 1939, in Milwaukee, to Earl and Tonnita (Freiman) Harrington. Siblings Helen, Thomas, Mary, Timothy, and Joseph, who died at birth, preceded her with siblings Michael and Kathleen "Katie" completing the family. Ann's father was a doctor, and her mother was trained as a nurse, but stayed home with the children. "I had a very delightful childhood," Ann commented, "my parents were incredible in the way they raised our family . . . Their loving relationship really modeled the way for me and my siblings . . . My parents were welcoming, and this was a reflection of their humble, loving personalities . . . [They] encouraged the moral values and passions that I have. My family life had a very positive influence on my life."

Ann attended St. Sebastian Elementary School in Milwaukee, and then Holy Angels Academy, where she began considering a religious vocation as a sophomore. By the time she was a senior, she simply knew without a doubt that it was God's plan for her life. Ann entered the BVM congregation on Aug. 2, 1957, following in the footsteps of her grandaunt SM Remi Harrington and cousins SM Donald McNeal and SM Helen Remi Regan. She received the name St. Remi at her reception on Feb. 3, 1958; professed first vows on Feb. 3, 1960; and lived 67 years as a BVM.

After profession, Ann was sent to the Scholasticate in Chicago to earn a bachelor's degree in French from Mundelein College. She later completed a master's degree in Asian Studies at Washington University in St. Louis; a master's degree in French language and literature from the University of Illinois – Chicago; and a doctorate in modern Chinese and Japanese history from Claremont Graduate School in Claremont, Calif.

Ann's most challenging mission was Mount Carmel Academy; to be more specific, her first year at Mount Carmel Academy. She was assigned to teach a general language course with one quarter each of Latin, French, Spanish, and German. "Neither German nor Spanish had ever crossed my lips," wrote Ann. "In [the German and Spanish quarters], I stayed far away from the language as possible. We learned lots of songs and indulged in many cultural activities, learning a good bit about [their] customs and foods . . . When it came to an evaluation of the course, you can probably guess the outcome. The students loved the Spanish and German units! My evaluation: It should never be taught again!"

Ann's immersion into Asian culture and history began at Xavier High School in St. Louis. She was sent to Xavier to teach French, English, and religion. However, Sister Virginia Berry, who taught gifted students, encouraged Ann to apply for a Carnegie grant to learn Japanese at nearby Washington University so that she could teach it at Xavier. During the summer of 1966, Ann traveled to Japan to study Asian life and visit key sites such as shrines, temples, theatres, museums, galleries, and even the Imperial Palace. The highlight of the experience was a two-week stay with a Japanese family during which Ann immersed herself into their Japanese customs. She summed up the experience writing, "I look at the country, its people, and its language in a new light, with new love and respect. I was particularly impressed by the Japanese people, their friendliness, their appreciation of nature and their energy."

The sixties brought many changes to religious life and Ann welcomed most of them, especially returning to her baptismal name and a new daily schedule that allowed her to rise later. When she took off the serge habit for good, one of her Xavier students took it and made a suit for her. However, it was also a time of great pain and loneliness as she watched some of her closest friends leave the congregation. Yet looking back, she felt that those days were terribly exciting and challenging, despite the pain.

In 1969, Ann joined the faculty at Mundelein College as a French and history teacher. She later served as the chair of the history department and director of the Liberal Studies master's program. After completing her doctorate, she coordinated the Asian Studies program at Mundelein.

Mundelein merged with Loyola University in 1991. Ann served as a professor of history and the director of the Asian Studies program at Loyola. There she continued her work in Japanese and Chinese history which included publishing several articles and being active on lecture circuits.

St. Paul wrote, "We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophecy, use it in proportion to your faith. If your gift is ministry, use it for service. If you are a teacher, use your gift for teaching." (Romans 12:6-7). Ann came from a long line of teachers including a grandfather who held a doctorate degree, a grandmother, two brothers, one sister, and a cousin. "My greatest accomplishment is that I've become a fairly successful teacher." A colleague called her "a master teacher." Illuminating other cultures for students was at the root of Ann's philosophy of teaching. She made foreign languages and cultures relevant by discussing current issues in the language being learned and by relating historical events to current events. "I like how much it teaches us about ourselves, our culture and why we do the things we do," she commented.

Ann's students were appreciative of her knowledge and passion. A Mundelein graduate shared on social media, "I have so much love for the sisters [and] am so very grateful to the BVMs for the Mundelein experience, especially to Sister Ann Harrington and Sister Mary Pat Haley [who] were favorite teachers whose good humor and knowledge were infectious!"

Ann will also be remembered for her significant contribution to the BVM community as a presenter at meetings of the BVM Heritage Society and as a writer of BVM history, including *Creating Community: Mary Frances Clarke and Her Companions* and *Expanding Horizons: Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1919-1943*.

Ann was most grateful for her loving extended family, her loving BVM community, and her loving friends. After fighting breast cancer, she wrote, "The experience reinforced for me the joy of being alive, gratitude for feeling good, awareness that life is precious and needs to be lived fully a day at a time. The experience has shown me God in a new way – the compassionate, caring face of God in my family, my BVM sisters and my friends." As Ann passed from this earthly life into eternal life, she again experience God in a new way – enveloped by pure love. Rest in love, Ann.