



## Remembering

Roseagnes Haskins, CSJ

July 16, 1927 – November 13, 2018

I was born on the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, July 16, 1927. Five hours after my birth, my Mother, Katherine Leiter Haskins, died of a pulmonary embolism. She and my Father, Paul Haskins, had been married for only 15 months. Knowing he could not raise me alone, my heartbroken Father gratefully accepted my maternal Grandmother's offer to take me into her home. She then had four adult children living with her. My two aunts, two uncles, and Grandmother became my family. The following year, my father married Edna Weber, whom he had known before. Father did consider bringing me into his home then but I was secure in the home of my Grammy. This was a fortunate decision, since nine years later, my little sister Lois Ann was born. She became the center of Paul and Edna's lives. They visited us occasionally and came over for holidays, but I never became a part of their family.

After my Aunt Regina and my Uncle John left home, there were only uncle "Slim" August, Aunt Agnes, and Gramma. Aunt Aggie gave me a life-long mother's love and Uncle Slim was my best pal. Gramma was the disciplinarian; a woman of Faith and German stoicism. The practice of our Catholic Faith was primary.

Coming to Gramma Leiter's home was expected many Sundays, as well as holidays and summers. Guests included were the Aunts and Uncles, and many Cousins. Two cousins became very dear: Penny, my Godchild, and Sister Jeanne Cecile Cools. We formed a life-long bond of mutual love and support.

My education began at Holy Cross in Los Angeles. A very young Sister Constance was my first grade teacher. My fourth grade teacher was Sr. Laurentia. What a joy it was to find that when we moved to St.

Anselm's Parish for my fifth grade, there Laurentia was! Sister chose me for the role of the nun in our Christmas play, and fitted me with a small habit saying: "Some day, Mary Kay, I may be dressing you in a real one." Thus the seed of vocation was sown!

My High School was St. Mary's Academy where many girls talked about entering the convent, and that pesky seed that Sr. Laurentia planted became a budding plant! But I held off, and went to the Mount for a year. Sitting in Sr. Ida Holiday's religious class one morning in March of 1946, I was sure she looked straight at me as she remarked, "Some of you girls are just here as ornaments!" I was sure sister meant me as being in the wrong PLACE! She laughed at my interpretation when I came to her office the next day. We talked, and she helped me with the process of entering which I did in September of 1946.

I made my first vows in 1949, and couldn't believe my first mission was to my own parish, St. Anselm! I taught 5th grade in the very same wooden building where I had been a student. I continued teaching in elementary school until 1958. Then I was sent to USC to obtain a Master's degree in Library Science. For the next 15 years I either established or restored the libraries of almost all the CSJ High School Libraries and at the Doheny campus. I was teaching several classes, and at Our Lady of Peace, directed choral groups for Christmas pageants, musicals and water ballets.

My step-mother, Edna, now a convert, died of cancer. My father then married Pauline Burns, a widow with an adult son, Robert. They were married nearly twenty-six years before she succumbed to cancer. It was in those years that I became close to my Father, my sister, and my step-brother,

and was often with them and with their families. I loved my role as "big sister" to Lois and Bob, and "Auntie Kay" to my nephews: Jason, Damon, and Tyler, and my grandniece, Lily and grandnephews Torrin, Sven, and Emory. In 1992 my Father died in an auto accident. Bob was taken from us by cancer in 1998, and also Lois in 2002.

When my aunt Aggie had a heart attack and stroke, I obtained permission to care for her at home in Santa Barbara until it was necessary to move her for more care. I was then asked to be co-administrator for Carondelet Center with Helene Wilson. This I did for three years, and then requested a Sabbatical at "Blessing Place" in Louisiana in 1990. I was only back from Sabbatical a month when Aunt Aggie died in February of 1991.

Caring for my Aunt stirred in me a desire to minister to the elderly, and in God's plan an opening was available for a Coordinator of the OASIS program of Catholic Charities in Santa Barbara. I obtained the position, and began to address the needs of the elderly in their homes for nearly 10 years.

After retiring from OASIS, I moved several times: To Madonna Manor in Salinas, to St. Joseph's in San Francisco, and Sophia Community in Sherman Oaks all the while continuing to minister to the elderly in various ways. While at Sophia, I discovered "Circle of Care: Leeza's Place" which provided activities for Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers. It was an inspirational place! Twice a month I also went to Holy Family sisters, to give a class called "Memory Joggers" which kept mind and spirit alert and active. This was my joy to present!

In 2007, I was asked to move to Providence Community in Northridge to assist with the needs of the sisters.

Providence had been established in 2003 as a community with supportive services. Gradually, however, the need for more extensive care necessitated our sisters moving to Holy Family, and Providence reverted to a regular community house in 2013.

It was at Providence that my fascination and love for Humming Birds came about. I began putting out nectar feeders in Providence's backyard. Soon the Hummers, Doves, and Sparrows all came to feed and use the bird bath. I learned from the birds' steadfastness, trust and perseverance, and found serenity in both their beauty and essence. Watercolor painting, writing, gardening, and house management kept me busy and content. Being an organized person, I loved to rearrange, clean out, and refurnish areas. I once said that if there was a fire all my things would burn in alphabetical order!

As long as I could, I spent at least one day each week visiting the Holy Family sisters. They were my peers for the most part, so we had common memories. My greatest pleasure was to bring them some laughter and sense of connection. I nearly always left with

a sense of being blessed to have spent time with these women.

In the Fall of 2014, I experienced several medical emergencies, and knew it was time to move to Holy Family. I made my plans and was scheduled to go after Jubilee 2015. However, another health episode occurred February 19th, and I was brought to Holy Family that afternoon. With medical care and loving assistance it was not long before I was stabilized and truly "at home." I initiated a twice-monthly gathering to share stories of "Back in the Day" experiences in our lives.

Visiting with my peers, joining the many activities offered, continuing my Art, remaining active and involved as long as I was able brought me contentment.

God has never failed to open another door when one closes. As my wall plaque states: "Lord, you who see through me, see me through!-So it is!

*Written last by Sister Roseagnes Haskins, CSJ and Sister Annette Debs, CSJ November 12, 2015*

