



Remembering

Sister Kathleen Lamia, CSJ

December 21, 1936 – September 11, 2019

A little redheaded girl came into the world in Santa Monica, California on December 21, 1936, to grace the Lamia Family. Her parents Maureen Green Lamia and Vincent Robert Lamia welcomed her as their third child. Kathleen Isabel joined her older brother Vince (Vincent) and her sister Maureen. Her brother Tom (Thomas) followed her two years later to complete the Lamia family. Though Kathleen kept up with and supported her two oldest siblings she remained closest to Tom.

When Kathleen, or Red Top, as she liked to be called, was six her parents divorced and she lived with her mother. After attending public school she became a boarder at Villa Cabrini Academy in Burbank in the seventh grade. It was there that she received her First Communion. This was a profound experience and she felt called, as she put it, "by a magnetic force driving me toward a life of service to God and others."

At thirteen, Kathleen moved in with her father with whom she remained close. She then attended

St. Monica's High School. In 1955 she enrolled in Mt. St. Mary's College in her Freshman year. She finished her education after she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph, receiving a BA in English and Social Studies and a teaching credential. She excelled in learning French but never had the opportunity use it.

Kathleen was attracted to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet because of their cheerful, friendly and joyous spirit. With the encouragement and assistance of Sisters Patricia Clare, Eloise Therese, and Fr. Sartoris (later a bishop), she applied for and was accepted into the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. On September 15, 1956 she joined 68 other young women to begin her formation as a religious, receiving the habit on March 19, 1957. After first vows Kathleen began thirteen years of ministry as a teacher. Though she taught other grades, first grade was her favorite. She served at the following schools: American Martyrs, Ascension, St. Lawrence Martyr,

Queen of all Saints, and De La Salle. After brain surgery and between hospitalizations Kathleen ministered in pastoral care at Our Lady of Lourdes in Pasco briefly, at Daniel Freeman in Inglewood and at La Habra Hospital. In 1985, Kathleen was invited to begin her favorite ministry of ministering to the senior Sisters at Carondelet Center who were in need of supportive services. She was an excellent seamstress, mending and washing their clothing. She also took pride in caring for and nurturing their plants.

The older sisters loved her and she them. In 2003, her own declining health necessitated that she become a member of Holy Family Community herself.

For fifteen years Kathleen was a member of Christian Therapists and served as a peer mentor. Her participation in this group gave her a sense of belonging and meaning. She looked forward to their annual conferences and attended monthly meetings.

Give Kathleen a Starbucks card and it made her day. When a driver from CC took her to an appointment she made it a point of including a visit to a Starbucks on her way home. When you would go to her room you will find Starbucks instant coffee waiting to be dissolved into a hot cup of java.

Kathleen was very faithful to her friends and family. She was present to and supported her sister Maureen until her death. Though her older brother Vince was more distant she tried to stay in touch. She kept up with her nieces and nephews and was proud of their accomplishments. In her declining months she phoned her brother Tom every Monday. For many years holidays were spent

with a cousin in the LA area. Each summer she planned a visit to a cousin in the Bay Area. She always included time with her friend, Sister Ann Weltz, while in the area.

Her favorite vacation spot was just outside of Yucca Valley in a cabin owned by her Mother. This cabin was in the high desert and somewhat primitive. She enjoyed vacationing in the desert for many years with community and friends. She enjoyed the beauty and quiet of the desert taking long walks, encountering nature, even a snake or two. As she became more infirm these visits were no longer possible.

Even with her extreme disabilities Kathleen participated in any Holy Family activity that was available to her and spent many hours each day listening to novels. Though she was slow in speech due to medication she was alert and made her wishes very clear. ❖

~ Written by Sister Diane Smith, CSJ

