



## REMEMBERING

Sister Judith Peters, CSJ  
March 8, 1938 - January 19, 2020

Judith Claudia Peters was born in Los Angeles on March 8, 1938, to Afra and Clarence Peters, “a wonderful mom and dad” who had left Quincy, Illinois, during the depression years so that he could take a job in a shoe manufacturing company in L.A.

Judy said that she and her younger sister Leanne belonged to the “lucky generation” of those who enjoyed playing kick the can, Red Rover, and baseball outside with friends in the neighborhood. Judy would delight in saying that she grew up with Roy Rogers, the Lone Ranger, and Hop Along Cassidy at a time when it cost only 15¢ to watch a movie at the theater. When TVs became the new entertainment medium, the Peters family was not the first on the block to have a TV, but that was inconsequential, as the entire neighborhood would gather around the television at the home of whoever had one. In Judy’s own words, “Life was good!”

That “good life” included first through eighth grades at St. Brigid

School in Los Angeles followed by high school at St. Mary’s Academy, from which she graduated in 1956. Judy cherished and nurtured many lifelong relationships from both school and neighborhood. As well, she fondly remembered the many CSJs who influenced her. She wrote for an issue of Designs that she was grateful for the “inspiring women who taught strong values by their example and dedicated lives.” Her childhood years would always remain happily memorable ones, blessed with family, friends, and teachers through whom she had daily experiences of a loving God.

It was not surprising, then, that Judy heard and responded to the call to share the love she experienced as a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

On September 15, 1956, she arrived at the House of Studies, and the following year was received into the Congregation as Sister Francis Kevin. After her first profession on March 19, 1959, she began a rewarding career in elementary education during which she said that

she tried to help children “have the best possible Catholic education and have fun at the same time, as I did as a child growing up in a loving family and surrounded by happy, fun-loving CSJs.”

She took her own fun-loving spirit with her to all of her teaching assignments in a number of schools in Northern and Southern California. Judy was an enthusiastic teacher who looked for ways to make lessons come alive for her students. In an effort to enliven a science chapter and help her students to experience the wonder of God’s creation, as well as to learn the responsibility and commitment necessary to care for it, Judy decided to incubate duck eggs in her Laguna Beach classroom. Evidently her students also learned first-hand and forever the meaning of the word imprint when the first moving object that the newly hatched ducklings saw and then followed was their own Sister Francis Kevin!

Her classroom teaching assignments were followed by a total of twenty-nine years of school administration at St. Anselm, Santa Clara, St. Lawrence Martyr, and St. Jerome Schools, where Judy was beloved by the students, parents, priests, and pastors alike. Her reputation as a teacher, administrator, and faith-community builder also led to four years as a District Coordinator for the Department of Education at the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

In addition, Judy responded to Province needs and served as Regional Superior and Provincial Councilor, as well as Director of Development ... with the same graciousness, warmth, care, and fun-loving spirit that characterized all of her relationships.

Outside of formally assigned ministry, her family, friends, and we

Sisters of St. Joseph all knew that Judy was ever ready for fun, and she was happiest when able to be part of a good time for all those she was with. When her mother moved back to Quincy, Illinois, after her father’s death, Judy’s home visit times included playing cards with her mom’s various social groups and rounds of golf with her cousins. As well, she enjoyed visiting her sister Leanne in Virginia and taking in all of the East Coast museums, sights, and experiences with her. At home, Judy loved to get together with and entertain friends ... to cheer on her favorite NFL or college football teams (especially Notre Dame) ... and always, to share a meal that she had lovingly prepared. She was always on the lookout for new recipes and even enrolled in cooking classes so that she could treat others to new gourmet delights. Shaped by her life experience, Judy became a poster child for CSJ hospitality. Her interactions with everyone showed that she had so naturally and completely become one of those “happy and fun-loving CSJs” who had inspired her as a child.

By her own admission, Judy enjoyed having time to “putter” around the house, but she was always ready to respond enthusiastically when friends invited her to join them for any kind of social gathering. She was in Catalina for a visit with friends just three days before the tragic fall that completely altered the ways that Judy was accustomed to ministering.

And yet, as unobtrusively as ever, she did continue to minister to all of us. Certainly almost every sister in the province is now more aware and accepting of age-imposed limitations. In these last years, Judy was not always able to use words

to communicate with her visitors, but her eyes lit up, and with her smile, they expressed the words and emotions that were otherwise locked inside. When her vocal chords did cooperate with her desire to speak, she would invariably respond, “I’m fine!” if asked how she was doing. During this last mission to “Prayer and Witness” as a member of Holy Family Community, we trust that Judy remembered us and our needful world in her Prayer. We have benefited from the example of her indomitable spirit that continued to Witness to the power of God’s love in her life - a love that empowered her to accept her newest ministry with the same positive attitude and graciousness that characterized her entire life. On the occasion of her

golden jubilee in 2006, she summed up her emotions by borrowing the words of one of her kindergarten students: “I’m happier here than I’ve ever been before!” We trust that Judy, who helped so many people to experience what she did - that “Life is good” - is now home with God and eternally happier there than she has ever, ✨

~ Written by Sister Lana Chang and friends of Judy

