



## *Remembering*

**Sister Regina Clare Salazar,CSJ**

**January 5, 1928 - November 30, 2021**

Sister Regina Clare was born on January 5, 1928 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, an only child to her loving parents Alfonso and Ambrosita Salazar. She was baptized Mary Vivian. She wasn't in Santa Fe for long. The family moved to Los Angeles when she was three months old. She recalled, "My father worked for the Santa Fe Railroad and had a pass on the train. So we could go back and forth once a year to visit relatives. And I lived here most of my life and was educated in Los Angeles.

"My parents were very devout Catholics. We attended Mass regularly, and participated in any activities that the Church offered. We were always there—my mother and dad both."

Regina Clare first met the Sisters of St. Joseph when she was a freshman at Catholic Girls High School, now Bishop Conaty High. "I was drawn to the sisters because they were very real, very ordinary. We could tell them anything, even though that probably wasn't too wise at times. They were very understanding of whatever we were trying to do, and always seemed to be happy."

After school, the sisters would gather in one of the classrooms and wait for their driver to come and take them home. "While they were there, we would notice that they'd be joking among themselves

and enjoying each other." They were well-educated women with strong opinions, but they got along so well. "They really were an attraction for me."

"I wanted to be a sister since I was little. My family had religious sisters in their history. I think it was in my junior or senior year that I decided, yes, I would be a Sister of St. Joseph." Regina became friends with two girls who were entering that year from St. Mary's Academy and they became lifelong friends—Sr. Miriam Joseph Larkin and Sr. Cecilia Louise Moore. "I love being with people, and I had been an only child at home, and now I was going to be with people who liked what I liked. Yes, I was very happy to come."

She was received into the community at St. Mary's Academy on March 19, 1946, receiving the religious habit and the name Sister Regina Clare. She made her first profession on March 19, 1948, and her final vows on August 15, 1951.

Regina's first mission was to teach sixth grade at St. Vincent's School in Los Angeles. "It was an old school, but beautifully kept, and I loved it." As her teaching ministry progressed, so did her studies at Mount St. Mary's College. She and the other sisters took their classes during the summer and on Saturdays during the school year. "Three of us were math majors." Regina remembered with fondness two of her special teachers—Sr. Rose Gertrude Calloway and Monsignor O'Reilly.

By the end of her six years at St. Vincent's, her special gifts were being recognized and she moved to Bishop Conaty Memorial High School, her alma mater, to teach high school math. Two years later, she was made an elementary supervisor for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. And after one year, she was missioned again, this time as teacher and vice-principal at newly opened Bishop Montgomery High School in Torrance, California. "We had a good faculty—twelve priests and twelve nuns. I loved high school, the boys and girls. In fact, I had someone from the first graduating class come to visit me recently. So, they are still remembering."

Her lifelong friendship with Sister St. Joan Willert began during these years at Bishop Montgomery, and continued on in the years of their healthcare ministry.

In 1960, Regina Clare learned that she would teach at Mount St. Mary's College so she left Montgomery and began doctoral studies at USC. During her years of study, she lived at the Doheny Campus and had the opportunity, with a few other sisters, to open and help to design the new Associate of Arts program for the Mount. This location gave the college the opportunity to address the issues of people who lived in the city. They wouldn't have to go to Brentwood, but could study and work in the urban area where they lived. Soon the college began to work with the California State Department of Education to bring a group of Cuban students to the campus to study English and earn their new degrees in this country.

After these years of doctoral study and teaching at the Doheny Campus, new ministry opened up again for Regina Clare. She was asked to go into hospital administration. "So I started back to school again." She received her credential for hospital administration at the University of St. Louis. By 1983, she was President/CEO of Daniel Freeman Memorial Hospital in Inglewood. Daniel Freeman was home for Regina during the multiple changes in health care until 2007. "I enjoyed twenty-two years in health care, and I loved every minute of it. And I loved the people that I worked with."

Not only did Regina Clare have a gift for leadership and administration, but she put great energy into developing a sense of mission in the administrators and staff. "When I retired from the office of President and CEO, I became the Vice-President for Mission, and at that time I would do all the training. I had a team with whom I worked. I interviewed every administrator, went to board meetings and medical staff meetings. And they always wanted to know what the sisters did, who we were." She told them, 'There are no special people. We treat people without discrimination. We acknowledge their gifts and give them the opportunity to excel. We let them know that our life is not only here on Earth, it has eternal roots, that we have great hope that God will provide for us and our partners in our mission to move forward.'

In 2007, Sr. Regina Clare herself moved forward to the first stage of her retirement. But this didn't mean an end to ministry. She moved to Carondelet Center as regional superior of Holy Family Community, bringing her gifts of administration, joyous spirit, and boundless compassion to her work with the retired sisters. At the end of her term as regional superior, she continued to serve and support the sisters as a member of Holy Family's Community Life team.

Reflecting on the number and variety of ministries where she had served, Regina tried to explain it. "I think I happened to be around when they were looking for somebody. People say, 'Did you choose this?' I never chose a blessed thing. They just pointed at me, 'She can do it. Send her.'"

One could assume that early in the morning of November 30<sup>th</sup>, that God said, "Regina come" and like everything else she did in her life she said "yes".

Looking back, we will always be grateful that Sr. Regina Clare happened to be around when God was looking for someone to send.

*~ Sister Mary Williams, CSJ using excerpts of a Mount Saint Mary's University interview*