

Lillian Camille Connors was born in Los Angeles, CA on January 25, 1934 to William Connors and Lillian Garza who made their home in Pasadena, CA.

Her Grandfather's family had emigrated from Ireland to Quebec, Canada where her father was born, and her mother was born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Sister Marion Patrick was very interested in her Irish heritage and proud of it. Celtic spirituality contributed to her own spirituality as evidenced by the books, music, icons, photos, and precious items including an Irish cross and statue of St. Patrick that adorned her room.

Lillian had two older sisters Marion and Marie named for the Blessed Mother, and she—the 3rd of 4 children including her younger brother William—was named for her own mother. Marie became the mother of Sister Marion Patrick's beloved niece, Chris Wood who preached so beautifully today. We honor the special bond they had as "Auntie" and Niece, each called to religious life and to a faithful and loving relationship not only as family but as Sisters. Theirs is a privileged path offered only a few.

Growing up in the San Gabriel Valley, Lillian attended San Gabriel Mission School in the primary grades and completed her elementary education at St. Elizabeth School in Altadena. A classmate once wrote to her, "Do you remember riding our bikes as fast as we could down Allen Avenue from New York Drive chanting, 'Look, Ma! No hands! 'Look, Ma! No feet! 'Look, Ma! No teeth!"

Lillian was then taught by the Sisters of the Holy Names at St. Andrew High School, graduating in 1951. High school was clearly a time of fun, adventure, mischief, and loyal friendships.

On the occasion of her Golden Jubilee, a number of her classmates created a scrapbook of memories from her high school days. Their comments pointed to Lillian's excellence in all things athletic. "I always picture you holding a ball," said one. And even in later life, a colleague in the Development Office recalled the conversations they had about their mutual love of sports, especially baseball.

Throughout her life she loved puns and had fun with word play, double entendres, and jokes. In high school she coined a brand new word, "Yeeth", for the plural of youth. A classmate remembered that Lillian attended high school dances with Mark Berg, Sister Petra's younger brother. Who knew?! Several classmates mentioned her love of cars—fast ones; how she snuck into a drive-in theater in the trunk of a friend's car, and how she initiated a prank on the P.E. coach by physically moving her car to a different location.

A fellow student at St. Andrew High School recalled, “after school we would go with a friend who had a car and set out for some innocent fun while smoking cigarettes IN UNIFORM!” In the words of another classmate, “We enjoyed our adolescence in high spirited ways.”

Lillian attended Mass at 6:30 every morning before school. Yet, one of her classmates recounts, “I remember how we used to sneak out of school, say we were going to church for the Angeles, and instead go down to Mijares and feast on tacos and enchiladas. We got away with a lot of stuff because the nuns knew we were going to enter the convent, a path which only Lillian pursued for a lifetime.”

Marion said that she was always in trouble in school and wasn't sure that the community would accept her. However, two letters in her file show another side of her. They reveal the “hidden self” that was Marion Patrick, the quietly held, contemplative—sometimes pensive—spiritual side of her that throughout her life could be missed by the casual observer. One letter, from the priest at St. Elizabeth's parish in Altadena said that she was well known as having a high spiritual and moral character. He noted her love of prayer and the Sacraments as well as her good, sound intelligence. The other letter was addressed to Mother Margaret of Cortona seeking entry into the Novitiate. Lillian said, “I feel certain that this life is the one God wishes me to follow. ... With the grace of God, I hope to be a faithful daughter of Mother Mary Rose during my life.” And so she was, and that is what we celebrate this afternoon.

Sister Marion Patrick attended Holy Names College for a year and eventually earned her BA in Philosophy and Math from the University of Santa Clara. These two areas seem to reflect the two dimensions of her personality—at once deeply thoughtful about the mysteries of life—and at the same time practical and factual in daily matters.

She began her ministry as an elementary school teacher at St. Cecilia, San Francisco, and then at St Gregory, Los Angeles, Our Lady of Lourdes and Sacred Heart in Oakland, and St. Ignatius in Sacramento, teaching grades three through eight. Health challenges required that she spend many months at the Los Gatos infirmary during her final year of teaching at Holy Spirit in Fremont.

In 1963, Marion Patrick's new ministry in service to the Provincial Treasurer's Office proved to be a perfect match for her fine mind, attention to detail, and acuity with numbers. She and Sister Emily Marie McKernan became a team to whom virtually every Sister bookkeeper turned for assistance with finances, understanding budgets and banking, and unraveling the mysteries of accounting. Marion's service was professional and supportive both to Sister Emily Marie and to all who turned to her with questions and requests. During my novitiate and early first vow years, I had the privilege of working in the Finance office during the summer. There I learned first hand from Marion Patrick about commitment to accuracy and attention to detail. We shared a love of mechanical things, tools, and fixit projects about which Sr. Emily would shake her head in disbelief. I also enjoyed many laughs (along with an occasional sip of beer) and other "adventures" with her that clearly were not part of the official novitiate program of the Province, but which supported and encouraged me through those formative and challenging years immediately after Vatican II.

After eighteen years in the Province Finance office, Marion moved to the Finance Office at Ramona Convent. On the occasion of her Golden Jubilee, the words of Margaret Spiller, Provincial at the time, spoke eloquently of Marion's service at Ramona. "You played a key role in the recovery after the devastating 1987 earthquake, including the management and oversight of the rebuilding for the four years following. You spent countless hours and drew upon a vast **pan**oply of skills, from interior designing, to cajoling, to inspecting—relating with everyone from the faculty and alumnae to the city of Alhambra—to bring the new building to reality. You tracked the progress of the FEMA grant; your persistence and dedication in dogging every jot and tittle, day after day, year after year, made sure that Ramona received its full share of the grant."

Marion's love for Ramona, loyalty to Ramona and the relationships she formed there, and her interest in the continuing growth and development of the institution remained strong. She loved to share stories of the challenges, opportunities, and joys of her Ramona days.

In 1991, Marion's legendary financial skills, coupled with her friendliness and hospitable spirit towards friends of the community contributed greatly to the successful outreach of the Province Development Office. Members of the Marie Rose Guild remained faithful friends who kept in contact with her for many years including the past four years at Fatima Villa.

The move from Los Gatos to Fatima Villa in Saratoga was especially hard for Marion because it was concurrent with an extremely difficult time for her, health-wise. However, she thrived there, working hard to move from the Skilled Nursing Facility to Assisted Living where she enjoyed her room as a sacred place and a place of hospitality to both SNJMs and the lay residents with whom she formed strong friendships. She served on the Resident Council, and found a new outlet for her talent and creativity in the weekly ceramics class. Some of her creations are on display in Durocher hall. She participated in a Bible study and faith sharing group with another resident and friend, Marilyn Friesen who brought great joy to Marion Patrick, especially when her days were particularly painful or difficult. Marion also found great joy in watching the birds outside her window—along with her collection of bobbleheads that danced in the sun—and spent many hours appreciating the window on nature that her room provided. Her hidden self grew stronger there. She was surrounded by religious imagery, poetry, and art of great beauty that was gentle and rooted in the Irish tradition. One of the Pastoral Team members noted that Marion often could be seen holding her rosary, in deep and quiet prayer, and that she brought a palpable contemplative spirit to the liturgies and communion services at Fatima Villa.

As we know, fast and fun are words that characterized her youth, her wit, her humor, and her mathematical genius. Faithful and fervent characterized her spirit, her soul, her commitment to the Holy Names community, and her love for family and friends. She was in many ways both fearless and fearful, meeting the challenges that met her, especially health challenges, while fearing that things might not unfold as she hoped, wished, or wanted. Her fine mind and attention to detail sometimes manifested in her being at times a bit fractious and finicky, especially when circumstances were beyond her control, and this caused her personal and private pain.

Written in her own hand and kept on her bedside table was the following quote from the Acts of the Apostles. “But life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about God’s mighty kindness and love.” This you did, Marion Patrick. And you did it until the unexpected moment when all was transformed and you were freed from all your pain and saved from all distress after waiting in joyful hope and completing your work here on earth. May you now rest in peace in the eternal embrace of God’s love and enjoy companionship and fun in the communion of saints with your family and friends.