Sister Paul Therese (Frances) Kraus, OP
(1917 – 2014)

In her homily at the funeral liturgy for Sister Paul Therese Kraus, Sister Joella Miller shared this remembrance.

Sister Paul Therese was a woman who loved the Congregation and could honestly say, “I was never anywhere that I didn’t love the nuns or the people that taught in school. They were all so nice. I’ve had a really happy life, except for the times I lost members from my family.”

Sister Paul Therese was born on February 4, 1917, in Detroit to Paul and Theresa (Lusch) Kraus. She was the youngest of five children. When she was very young, her father became ill and her mother took in laundry so they would have food to eat and money to pay their bills.

She and her three sisters attended their parish school, St. Anthony, from first grade through high school. Her brother John attended St. Anthony Grade School and then began his studies for the priesthood in the Precious Blood Order. He was ordained in 1936.

The idea of becoming a Sister was first sparked by Sister Marie, one of her Notre Dame grade school teachers, but she put the idea aside, after graduating from high school in 1935, to work as a cashier for six years at Crowley Milners. When her brother asked when she was going to the convent she thought, “Maybe it’s about time, but I don’t want to be a teacher.”

In her autobiography she described how she used the National Catholic Directory to find information about religious congregations that did not teach. The information for St. Dominic said there was an orphanage so, thinking they did not teach school, she wrote a letter to the Sister superior. This was her first contact with the Adrian Dominican Sisters.

In 1941, Sister Paul Therese entered the postulate in Adrian. During her novitiate she was often homesick for her family, but when Sister Brigetta, the Postulant Mistress, would say something to her about leaving, she would reply, “I guess I will stay another week.” Indeed she stayed for seventy-two years.

After first profession in December 1942, Sister Paul Therese remained in Adrian for the next eight months to study at Siena Heights College (now University).

From 1943 to 1957, she taught elementary grades at three schools named St. Lawrence: in Cleveland, Ohio; in Detroit; and in Utica, Michigan. During the summer she continued her studies at Siena Heights and received her bachelor of philosophy Degree in 1947.

For the next twenty-five years, Sister Paul Therese taught in several grade schools in Michigan and Ohio. She also spent two years at St. John Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan, as housekeeper.
In 1984, Sister Paul Therese retired and came to Adrian, where she became a tutor at St. Joseph Academy. She also made crafts and was famous for the clowns she made for the Academy bazaars. In her 1995-96 Annals, she wrote about an article in the Congregation, *In-Between*, where she was honored for her dedication to St. Joseph Academy and the Montessori Children’s House. She said, “I was given a plaque affirming my dedication to tutoring students and for the sale of over 300 tickets for the raffle which took place at the Mardi Gras in February.”

Sister Paul Therese Kraus died on October 28, 2014, in the 72nd year of her religious profession.

During the wake/remembrance service, Sister Jo Gaugier, Chapter Prioress of Holy Rosary, shared the following thoughts about these final years:

*Sister Paul Therese came to Adrian when she was 67 years of age, became a tutor at St. Joseph Academy, did craft work, and notably made clowns for bazaars. When she could no longer be active in this way she loved to tell stories about the children she taught. Relatively healthy throughout her life of 97 years, Sister Paul Therese did face the sadness of darker days and other illness she had to overcome. There is no doubt she will forever be remembered for her love of those Tigers. Her usual quiet presence was transformed into a cheering fan when the Detroit Tigers came on the radio or TV. A pastime she recalled from childhood—she would say. “When I was a kid it cost 50 cents for the game] and 12 cents for car fare.” That’s how her love affair with the Tigers began.*

*Thank you, Sister Paul Therese, for reminding us of life’s simple pleasures, for being one of us in difficult days and good days all mixed together, for being a faithful Sister. Rest in the goodness of whatever that life is that you now live….forever in peace.*

During the wake several family members shared their favorite memories about their Aunt Fran.

Dennis Kelly began by thanking the staff and Sisters for their loving care of his Aunt Fran. He said, “Aunt Frances willingly accepted the challenges of life. Her life will always inspire me.”

Mike Kelly said he would always remember Aunt Fran as teacher and as avid fan of the Detroit Tigers. He especially remembered their flight to Phoenix for a World Series game. It was Aunt Fran’s first experience of flying. Mike said, “It was a white knuckle, five rosary flight during which Aunt Fran asked if they could open the window because the cabin was hot.” He also remembered the family concern when his son, Francis, decided to switch from his school’s baseball to the basketball team. What would Aunt Fran say?

Francis Kelly also recalled the concern about his move to basketball, but his special memory was bonding with his Aunt Fran during their lengthy flight to Phoenix as they talked about the Tigers: players, scores, ranking, etc.

Sonny Kelly said she would miss Aunt Fran’s calls every Sunday and visiting with her when they prepare the Thanksgiving meal this year.
Chris Wethington, friend and neighbor, recalled a story about how Aunt Fran helped her ten-year-old son prepare dinner starting with a frozen chicken. Chris said she would always remember Aunt Fran’s generous spirit and kindness even to a neighbor.

Sister Joella Miller described how she and Sister Rosemary Asaro drove Sister Paul Therese to Detroit this past summer to attend what would be her last Tigers game. The challenge for them was coping with Sister Paul Therese’s walker on their way to find their seats in the baseball stadium and then back to their car after the game. Thanks to considerate staff on their arrival and the officer directing traffic after the game, all went well. “Whew!”

Sister Joella’s homily centered on Christ’s words, “Let not your hearts be troubled” (John 14:1). The following is an excerpt of her homily.

Although this is a time for grief and sadness over the death of Sister Paul Therese, this is also a time to treasure and laugh as we recall our wonderful memories of her.

**The Detroit Tigers:** They could not begin a season unless Sr. Paul was in the crowd.

**St. Joseph Academy:** All year long, Sister Paul made clowns and sold them [at the bazaar] for her beloved St. Joseph Academy.

**Procurator:** For twenty five years of her forty-one years on mission Sister Paul was the procurator. She took care that the Sisters had everything they needed.

We confess our faith in Christ boldly. “I believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.” Sister Paul Therese is in the hands of Jesus, in death, just as she was every day of her life. “Let not your hearts be troubled.”

Fr. Jim Hug, S.J., composed this opening prayer for the funeral liturgy:

> Our Loving God, Father/Mother of all creation, loving foundation of all families, of all loving relationships, Of all gentle and kind concern, We have come together today from far and near to celebrate our sister, Paul Therese – our Aunt Fran, to thank you for the wonderful gift of her time with us, a time of loving attentiveness, love of sports and good fun, a time of prayer, dedicated education and Gospel proclamation, a time of grace and creative service, a time of letting go of all she treasured into Your Hands. Let the shape and loving care of our lives join with hers in compassionate, creative, and generous service, in gentle openness, in living life to the full even through difficulties, and in commitment to You, the saving Mystery of our lives.
We make our prayer in the name of Jesus and the communion of your Spirit where we all are one with You and Paul Therese, now and forever. Amen.