



**Remembering Sister Vivian
(Clare Edward) Karas, IHM
July 6, 1929 - July 25, 2006**

I remember Vivian as always being on time, and being ready for whatever the occasion happened to be. Her Remembering was no different. She wrote what she wanted people to remember her about her. I had strict orders to make sure it was kept short and simple.

Before I read her part, I have a few things we talked about and a few things I heard from her friends. They said she was low-keyed, good natured; a hard worker, loved by many and enjoyed the simple things of life. I would say that was very true.

She must have told her friends that when she had her brothers and sister for dinner she specialized in Bohemian dumplings and roast pork. That is true, too, and she did an excellent job doing that.

She was very concerned about the financial burden of the Community since the renovation. With help from the staff at the Development Office she composed request letters for assistance from wealthy names such as Mr. Guttierrez from the Kellogg Co., Merv Griffin, Regis Philbin, and Donald Trump. No one responded, but she kept on hoping. When ever the Mega Millions grew significantly she bought a ticket. Still hoping! She may have a few other insights now.

One more thing we should know - she took courses in Spanish in college and she loved it. I know Sister Jean McInerney helped her with phrases to refine her work, so she taught all her classes how to count and say the "Hail Mary" and the "Our Father." Even the little ones at Child Care learned some phrases which made their parents very happy. Her third grade students had a part in the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration because of this special talent they acquired.

I must remember to keep this simple. When I was about six years old I would go through the Montgomery Ward catalogue and pick out pictures of babies with pretty dresses and show Mom which ones I liked. One day as I was leafing through the catalogue I showed her a special picture, and Mom said, "That is a pretty dress." I said, "Not the dress. The baby is what I like." Mother gave me no answer, but a year or so later you were born, and I was very happy.

Let me introduce her written part. About two weeks ago Vivian was hemorrhaging, and she thought she was going to die right then. It was about one o'clock a.m. It was then she decided to write what she wanted people to remember about her. This is what she wrote:

Vivian was the fifth child of Edward Karas and Clara (Krenz) Karas born on July 6, 1929, in Battle Creek, Mich. She has two brothers, Francis and Ivan, and sisters, Sister Josephine and Berniece.

Her father's parents came from Bohemia and her mother's parents from Germany. Her father was in World War I and was stationed in Fort Custer in Battle Creek where Clara was working. Edward and Clara were married in St. Philip Church in Battle Creek.

Vivian's father died when she was two years old. Edward had contracted TB during the War and the disease progressed rapidly eventually causing his death. Clara was left with five children. Frank, her "saintly" younger brother, lived with the family and took a father's place perfectly.

Sister Vivian's young years were lived on a farm where she loved the open spaces and fresh air and had happy times with her brothers and sisters.

It was at St. Philip School in the fifth grade that Vivian said something "magic" happened. She met her life-long friend, Bonnie Stienbacher, who is now Mrs. William DeLano. And I add - is sitting in the Chapel with her husband, Bill.

After graduation in 1947 she joined the IHM Community and as she says, "I never looked back." She received her degree at Mercy College, and did practice teaching at St. Mary of Redford. She was missioned at St. Patrick, Carleton, St. Philip, Battle Creek, and St. John, Jackson.

After retiring from St. John School, she found a position at St. Mary Child Care in Jackson. She spent 12 delightful years there and was sorry to leave. Sue Hutchison, the director, and the Child Care staff formed "the most wonderful staff anyone could ever work with" Sister says.

Soon after retiring from St. John School, Lisa Cavender asked Sister if she would care for her eight-month-old son, Michael, while she worked. She accepted, and that was the beginning of a tremendous friendship which is still blooming today. She and Michael became buddies and friends. Her classmates used to tease her about the pictures of Michael that she brought to reunions.

For 26 years Sister Vivian and Sister George Ellen Brannick shared prayers, laughs, and tears together. God gave them a special bond of friendship.

Sister Marie Evelyn Dunn was a true, loyal friend since 1947

In October 2004 ovarian cancer appeared. She took chemotherapy treatments for six months and was in remission for three months, and then it reappeared. After another session of chemo it appeared again.

She was happy to come to Monroe so she could get the care she needed, and have the loving support of her sister, Sister Josephine, and all the sisters. On the Fourth of July, Vivian told me she decided not to take any more chemo, and as she said "I'll just let the chips fall where they will."

She loved her family, her nieces and nephews and friends and will be waiting to see them again some day.

Thanks, Vivian, for your life, your love, and all the joy you brought to so many people.

Written by Sisters Vivian Karas and Josephine Karas
July 31, 2006