

Sister Mary Walter Dwyer, SC
Entered eternal life on November 5, 2022



Good morning, everyone.

My name is Marion Loh, one of Sr. Mary's, or Walter's, or Lola's nieces expressing very heartfelt remembrances of our dear, dear Aunt Lola on behalf of all her family.

Lola was born on May 26, 1929 and left us after a not short enough arduous journey this past Saturday, November 5. I say not short enough because after Aunt Lol received her diagnosis and the doctor had told her what little time she had left she turned to me and with those beautiful blue eyes said incredulously, "6 months, I don't even want one month." Reflecting on that statement, one piece of the special woman Lola was stands out: she never wanted to take up anyone's valuable time or waste precious moments that might be better used by serving someone who really needed a hand more. Whether that be a Valerie or Mary ringing the doorbell at St.

Columba's convent or when she was principal at St. Columba's School working long and hard to get a very much needed lunch program for all the children who really would benefit from good nutrition, or, just helping a "street friend" in Newark get a job. And that was just another of all the gifts Aunt Lola had and gave so freely; seeing a real need and working to get it satisfied. She knew how to bring people together and make something or someone 'right'.

Lola was born in Jersey City. Her parents were Walter, a high school shop teacher, and his wife, Marion (McFaul) a homemaker. Her father left them too early, at the age of 11 Lola and her brother and sisters with their mom went on to build a life together. Lola was the third of four children, Walter, Marion, Lola, and Margot. A funny little story that Lola liked to tell was that her mother said she had three girls, one that told her everything, mine and Joe's Mom, one that told her nothing, Kevin, Laura, Debbie and Patty's Mom and one that told her exactly what she wanted to hear... and that was Aunt Lol. Her brother and sisters would go on to marry and Lola's in-laws Mary, Tom and Al were also an important part of the scene of Lola's life. All have predeceased Lola as well her nephew Kip and niece Kathleen. She helped care for all three of her siblings as they faced challenges throughout their lives'. I am sure that they were all there Saturday at the gate of heaven welcoming her to her new home with God.

In 1946, at the young age of 17, Aunt Lola left home to begin her journey as a Sister of Charity. She always laughed when my mother told her she wouldn't last one month. If they were gambling women, then my mom would have lost the house. I would like to share with you a great story Aunt Lola loved to talk about how she became a nun and I think she would love it if we shared it today. When she was a senior at Snyder High School in Jersey City, she would be allowed to miss class if she attended the Lenten mission at Our Lady of Victories Church. Lola jumped at that chance, being excused from class was just a great idea! Even though she claims she didn't know what the priest was talking about and just having good old fun she continued to attend Mass regularly. Somewhere in there she saw nuns praying and working around the church and she decided she wanted to be one. A friend of her mother knew a Sister of St. Joseph in Bayonne and took her down there. Lola, the way she tells it, says the nun was alert. She was 17, had never gone to Catholic school and didn't seem to know any answers to the questions the nun asked. The nun did offer to send for some vocational material and Lola went back to Bayonne three times for it, but this 'sharp' nun says it never came. Aunt Lol went home crying. A friend of her brother was there and saw Lola crying and told her about a Sister of Charity she knew and offered to take her to meet her. So, they went out to Newark on the train together. When the door of the convent opened, I don't believe it ever closed with Lola on the outside again. She was practically vested in an hour. She became part of your Band of '46. Later, when she met more 'established' Sisters, Aunt Lol asked about Sister Marianne, the nun who had 'practically vested' her. What she found out was that sister had retired

shortly after Lola met her because she was totally senile. Getting Lola into the convent was the last rational act she had ever performed! Again, Aunt Lola's story.

Aunt Lola taught in Tenafly and Harrison, NJ, and then became a principal at St. Joe's in Pensacola, FL, followed by her years as principal at St. Columba's. My own memories of Lola in Pensacola were of Easter time and how she and the nuns would invite the cooks' children over and they would have beautiful Easter baskets for all the children and warm hugs. I suppose all of you beautiful women are the same in the sense of charity and selfless giving and Aunt Lola just loved you all. The fit of your community family was like a glove for her. Aunt Lola has lived for the past 50 years in that home on South Street. We came to know her Sister sistas as family, Eileen Bradshaw, Carol Johnston, Debbie Humphreys, Noreen Neary, Ellen Dauwer to name just a few...and most dearly Sisters Peggy Welch and Rita O'Farrell.

We were all thinking of how Aunt Lol always showed up for everything and all the good memories - time spent together going somewhere, doing something, or just chatting on the phone. Of the "little gifts of love", that is what she called her gifts at Christmas, a homemade box of fudge, candied pecans, or a donation in our names to the community food bank- all through the years the "little gifts of love." What we didn't realize when we were young but so clearly did as we grew older, is that the greatest gift of all was the time she spent with each of us. A special outing, a lunch, a dinner, a visit, a party at St. Columba's, a phone call, a road trip, or as my daughter would say, spending weeks at "Camp Convent" each summer. She helped teach us the values of patience, kindness, humility, love and most importantly charity. Give what you can to those less fortunate, whatever your gift is, give it freely.

We really hit the lottery for Aunts, Lola. God Bless and Godspeed from all of us.

Marion Loh
Niece of Sister Mary Walter Dwyer, SC