

In Memoriam: Sister Jean Lenz, OSF



Sister Jean Lenz, OSF (1930 – 2012) died at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, Illinois on January 21, 2012. A native of Chicago, IL, she was one of four children born to Joseph and Gertrude (Mansell) Lenz. She is survived by her sister and brothers; Trudy, Raymond and Jack. Sister Jean was a treasured member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate (Joliet) for 60 years.

Before entering religious life, Sister Jean was a member of St. Martin Parish in Chicago, IL and attended the parish grade school. She graduated from the Academy of Our Lady before earning a bachelor's degree from the College of St. Francis (University of St. Francis) in Joliet, IL. She did graduate work in journalism at Marquette University and completed a master's degree in theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Sister Jean began her ministry in 1955 at St. Francis Academy (Joliet Catholic Academy- JCA) teaching English and Journalism. From 1962 until 1971 she served the Congregation in the area of initial formation along with teaching theology at the College of St. Francis. In 1973 when the University of Notre Dame became a co-ed school, Sister Jean became the first female director of Farley Hall along with teaching as an adjunct professor at the University. In 1984 Sister Jean became the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Notre Dame and in 2002 she became its Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, retiring from that position in 2009. Since 2009 she continued to serve at the University in the area of Pastoral Ministry.

She was very proud to be a Joliet Franciscan Sister; in the Congregation's 2009 video "Rebuild My Church", Sister Jean said "I can't imagine my life without my Sisters. I can't imagine my ministry without them. They are people I dearly love. My congregation never ceases to amaze me!"

Among Sister Jean's honors are an honorary degree from the University of Portland received in 1998 recognizing her service as "a mentor and example to students of how one might live a life in pragmatic, patient, humorous and prayerful service to others." In 2002, she published "Loyal Sons and Daughters," an anecdotal and autobiographical account of that service. And in 2007, her name was added to the Wall of Honor in Notre Dame's Main Building. She also served on the Board of Trustees at the University of St. Francis in Joliet for the past thirty-two years.

The wake for Sister Jean will be at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, 1201 Wyoming Avenue, Joliet, IL, (Wyoming and Rt. 30) on Wednesday, January 25, 2012, from 2:00 – 6:45 p.m., with a Prayer Service at 4:30 p.m. and Mass of Christian Burial at 7:00 p.m. The Funeral Procession will leave from Our Lady of Angels on Thursday morning, January 26, 2012, at 9:00 a.m. The Interment will take place at Resurrection Cemetery in Romeoville, IL.

Memorials may be made to the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate, 1433 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435.



Sister Jean Lenz's plaque which was placed on the Wall of Honor at the University of Notre Dame in 2007.