

I first met Jeanne when I became engaged to her brother Jack in 1964 and we drove to upstate NY for a visit. She was eager to introduce us to her Franciscan Sisters and to share with us the pride she felt beginning her own journey as a Franciscan. She felt confident in her choice of vocation and loved living in community. I left that visit feeling I had met a warm and outgoing person who clearly knew what was most important to her.

Over the years we were not just sisters-in-law but became close friends. Being a teacher Jeanne was often able to come and spend a week or two in the summer with our family. She came to know her 3 nephews - Brian, Paul & John, and niece Kristin very well. She participated in all the summer activities - swimming, boating, and attending summer theatre and playing board games with them. They loved her visits. Later another generation of 7 were born; grandnieces & nephews - Sofia, Kayle, Claire, Liam, Harrison, Lucas & Max. And she loved being with them too. They all loved Aunt Jeanne's system of sending birthday cards with the same number of dollars as their age. Each year made them a little richer.

Although she always enjoyed her visits, as the week came to a close Jeanne looked forward to returning to her Franciscan Sisters again and continuing her life in community with them.

Jeanne spent her active ministry in education, healthcare, and spiritual direction. She was a life long learner. She received her bachelor's degree in math at St. Elizabeth's Teacher's College here in Allegany. She pursued graduate studies at Villanova, St. Bonaventure, The School of Applied Theology at Berkley and Neumann College. She received master's degrees from St. Bonaventure and Neumann College. Jeanne taught high school math in N.Y. and Florida. She loved her senior math students in Florida and always volunteered to chaperone Senior Night at Disney World. By the end of her teaching career, she knew Disney World like the back of her hand.

In Florida she became close to the Bradley family as she taught math to all of their sons. They in turn taught Jeanne to sail aboard their sloop,

Napenthe. Being Jeanne, she went one step further and earned her Coast Guard Sailing Certification.

Jeanne next accepted an internship in youth ministry at Rye Beach, N.H. She loved working with the Friars and especially enjoyed collaborating with them on music for celebrations - her guitar was always close at hand. She had fun ice skating on their pond too. Knowing how much she enjoyed ballet, the Friars found an empty room on the top floor of the retreat house for her to practice and enjoy just dancing. One of the Friars made her a pair of sandals that she wore with pride for many years.

She returned to Florida and became part of the retreat team at the Franciscan Center in Tampa. The Center would remain a special place for Jeanne. Although she would serve in new ministries, she would come back there many times to offer retreats and spiritual direction.

In 1985 Jeanne earned a degree in massage therapy. She found it to be one of her most rewarding ministries. One group she worked with were patients suffering from AIDS - people who for so long had been considered untouchable. Needless to say, they were very grateful for her caring touch and willingness just to be with them. She also taught new mothers, at risk of child abuse, how to massage their babies to calm them and to help decrease the tension of a distraught child within the home. In these individuals, Jeanne felt she truly did make a difference and did in fact help them experience God's love.

In later years, Jeanne had an opportunity to be a member of the Regional Leadership Team and then serve as Director of the Franciscan Associate Program. Both offered her new challenges and new learnings.

When COVID hit, Jeanne embraced the possibilities of what Zoom could do. Since no one was traveling she set up Zoom meetings so that all our family could gather remotely for the holidays. She was again working at the Franciscan Center and now using Zoom to give retreats. It remained

vital to her to be connected to her Ministry and her Franciscan Sisters. Nothing was ever more important than that.

Jeanne called me last week to tell me that she had made a decision; she would stop actively fighting this battle with cancer. She told me - "I feel very blessed that I am part of a community of sisters. They will be with me on this last journey to offer comfort. I will never be alone. I will be in their kind and loving hands until I'm in God's hands. I am truly blessed and at peace".

Later, I thought back to the time I first met Jeanne and her confidence then that she had made the right choice - the choice to become a Franciscan Sister.