



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO Box 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036
WWW.OLDENBURGFRAUCISCANS.ORG



S. JOAN LAUGHLIN, OSF

Dear Sisters and Associates, Co-workers, Family, and Friends,

"Remain in me as I remain in you." John 15:4

Just a few hours after we heard these words from John's Gospel at Sunday Liturgy, Sister Joan Laughlin quietly let go into the loving arms of God. Joan had spent her life learning to remain in Jesus and to welcome the indwelling presence of God to remain in her. This presence she freely shared with others in her many relationships and ministries.

Joan Marie Laughlin was born on December 7, 1935, the first child born to Frank and Mary Clare Laughlin in Buffalo, New York. Two years later, her brother, Jim was born. When Joan was just three years old, the family moved to Cincinnati because of her father's work. "Both of my parents were very loving and protective of me and my brother, Jim," Joan wrote, "and they both had a good sense of humor."

Joan attended grade school at St. Clare's in College Hill, and high school at Our Lady of Angels. She writes warmly of new friendships formed at OLA and taking part in extra-curricular activities, "even though it meant taking three buses home from school." In the summer of her sophomore year, Joan attended the CSMC convention at Notre Dame, where the stories of missionaries sparked a desire in her to be a missionary. When, in her senior year, she began to think seriously about entering the convent, she wrote to missionary communities, though later "it became clear to me that Oldenburg was where I was being drawn." She entered the Community on Sept. 8, 1954.

Joan taught for twenty-five years in elementary schools. S. Miriam Kaeser, who lived with her during these years, says that Joan's many students experienced her deep caring and sense of humor. "Joan's ministry reached far beyond the classroom walls through her parish involvement in worship and social justice, and in ecumenical efforts."

From Joan's writings, it is clear that while she enjoyed each ministry that was part of her life, three experiences held special places in her heart: her ministry with the Associates, her years in Community Leadership, and her time in Papua New Guinea. Joan was particularly grateful for things that broadened her horizons and deepened her spirituality. When Joan became the first Associate Director, and later when she and Judy Hillman were Co-directors, something new came alive in her. "I found this work to be challenging and invigorating as I talked with women and men who were interested in being associated with our Community. I was definitely confirmed in my own vocation as I did this work."

Looking back on her years in Community leadership, Joan reflected, "My eight years on the General Council have probably been some of the most growth-filled years of my life. Working as part of a team has taught me much about myself. It has stretched me to look at issues from a much broader perspective."

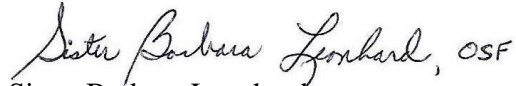
When Joan accompanied S. Kate Holohan to Papua New Guinea in the last year of their leadership, she found herself wondering, "Whatever happened to the missionary call that I seemed to experience when I was in high school?" After thoughtful discernment, Joan accepted the invitation to return to PNG in 1995. For the next five years, her ministry was in Formation with the Franciscan Sisters of Mary. She later claimed that a part of her heart would always be with them.

When Joan “retired” in 2011, she remained fully engaged in many interests. As one of her classmates remarked, “Joan squeezed every ounce out of life.” She was actively engaged in Community events, served on committees, as a lector for Liturgies, enjoyed meeting with her OA students in Adopt-a-Sis, and had numerous hobbies as well. Joan was a writer, keeping journals of everything of interest in her day from the weather to historical events, to Reds’ scores. She enjoyed photography and writing poetry, and true to her sense of humor, she kept an entertaining log of “Convent Graffiti.”

Joan was a woman of prayer. She relished having time for quiet prayer. She was a gentle woman, interested in everyone, having the lovely quality of always seeing the good in people. Joan was inquisitive by nature, a generous listener, a big-hearted and faithful friend. She took everyone’s cares to heart. We have all been touched by her wisdom, her humor, and her loving attention to the little blessings in life.

We offer our sympathy to Joan’s brother, Jim, her niece, Kelleen, and her nephew, Sean; to her classmates and Community members; to all who shared life with her as Associates and friends. We thank our nurses who lovingly cared for Joan in these last weeks and those near and far who supported her through visits, phone calls, and prayer.

In gratitude for a life of gracious love,



Sister Barbara Leonhard

For the General Council

SISTER JOAN (formerly Sister Naomi) LAUGHLIN

Birth: December 7, 1935

Entrance into Community: September 8, 1954

Entrance into Eternal Life: May 2, 2021

MISSIONS WHERE S. JOAN SERVED:

1956-1959 Holy Name, Beech Grove IN

1959-1962 St. Mary, Greensburg IN

1962-1964 St. Bernard, Cincinnati OH

1964-1967 Holy Family, Richmond IN

1967-1982 St. Clare, Cincinnati OH

1980-1986 Associate Director, Sisters of St. Francis

1982-1984 St. Aloysius Gonzaga, Cincinnati OH

1985-1986 Coordinator for Community Facilitators
and St. Pius, Cincinnati OH

1986-1994 Member of General Council, Oldenburg IN

1994-1995 Sabbatical

1995-2000 Formation FSM’s, Papua New Guinea

2001-2011 Associate Co-Director, Oldenburg IN

2011-2021 Motherhouse Ministry, Oldenburg IN

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Weigel Funeral Home – visit their website to view Sister’s online memorial, and if desired, an online condolence may be left on the site to share with her family and the Franciscan Sisters – www.Weigelfh.com

*S. Joan’s funeral will be live streamed beginning at 3:00 and can be viewed by via the following link:
<https://youtu.be/1mAmvb6T8pE>*

Memorial Donations in Sister’s memory may be given online at www.OldenburgFranciscans.org