



Wake Stories of Jeanne Granville, BVM (Suzette)

Marian Hall Chapel, June 18, 2018

Bob Sammon, (Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)

When I reflect on my middle school years at Our Lady of Loretto School in Hempstead, N.Y., I realize how blessed at that time I was with educators such as Sisters Jeanne Granville, Margaret McCulloch and Mary McCauley. They truly created the space separate from the elementary school across the street for middle school youngsters. What I admire most about Jeanne is how she conducted a class of 44 students across the hall from Mary McCauley with 43 students. Who would think of class sizes these large today! Sister Jeanne, petite in size, walked in with confidence each day, and we all knew she was an educator trained in the BVM tradition.

I was a European History major in college and I had to take a few American History courses. Jeanne was the best American History teacher for the post-Civil War era that I had in high school and perhaps in college. She stood in front of the slightly raised dais and teacher's desk and just talked in a conversational tone. Her delivery of the Gilded Age and the 1920's remains with me today as I continue to select many novels from that time period. I do not remember notes in her hands; she just seemed to know what she was talking about. While my earlier years focused on diagramming sentences and grammar, Jeanne introduced us to poetry in the eighth grade. We had a small book that offered many selections, which included Robert Frost and e. e. cummings. Jeanne taught us about haiku and asked us to construct poems of that fashion, but I never could get the hang of it.

Jeanne was the true educator that the BVMs trained her to be, particularly with her intellect and sense of well-being. I only wish she had had more years at Our Lady of Loretto to share her giftedness that I, and so many students, benefited from.

Paul Bayless, Nephew

My mom was the oldest of the siblings and Jeanne was the youngest. When I was a little kid about five years old, I remember her getting all excited. I didn't understand why, but she'd say, "Aunt Jeanne's coming in." She was in Chicago at the time. The first few times when she was coming, mom would say, "Sister Suzette is coming in." What is a "Sister Suzette?" I had no idea what that was. We would go down to pick her up at the train station. Mom would say, "I wonder if Sissy and Pudgy are going to be there." What is a "Sissy and Pudgy?" It turned out that they were also two BVMs whom she used to hang around. Their last name was Moore. I don't know what their sister names were; we just knew them as Sissy and Pudgy. It sounded like a vaudeville act to me with Suzette, Sissy and Pudgy. I remember waiting for the train to come in. She would get off wearing the old habit. I'd never seen anything like it and thought, "What did they do to her head?" It was like she had a TV on her head. Those are memories my of Jeanne until I got to know her better. I was looking back at her old photos and it confirmed what I thought about her head. My nephew passed away a couple of years ago. He told me that the thing he remembers most about Jeanne is that she was so nonjudgmental.

Sister Agnes Marie (Dee Dee) Keena, BVM (Read by Sister Irene Lukefahr, BVM)

"The loveliness of a single flower in radiant bloom can sing my drooping spirit into joy. The loveliness of a single person with a listening gaze can sing my heavy heart back to life. I've come across both kinds in my time of need and both have brought me hope." This poem by Sister Joyce Rupp, speaks of what gift Jeanne gave to me – the gift of hope. I knew Jeanne as a principal, as a director of education and, more importantly, as a BVM friend. I

was blessed to be a small part of Jeanne's life. I was blessed to have Jeanne affirm me many times in my ministry as teacher and principal. After Jeanne came to Mount Carmel, I was blessed when the community assigned Jeanne to be one of my prayers. I knew I was in good hands. The last visit I had with Jeanne was a few months ago. I'm not sure if she was aware of what I was saying, but I was thanking her for taking time to bless me with her presence and hope. At this time, I believe that Jeanne is listening once again and whispering back to me, Karen Pollard and Margaret McCulloch the words of Mary Frances Clarke, "Go on steady and quiet." and "All shall be well."

Sister Mary McCauley, BVM

I had the privilege of being with Jeanne at Our Lady of Loretto in Hempstead, N.Y. I was a middle grade teacher while Jeanne taught the eighth grade. As things happened, all of the sudden, I was assigned to teach eighth grade. Jeanne mentored me into being an eighth grade teacher. She was just a delight to work with. She was so organized, sensitive, very kind, but also very firm. I have to commend her for helping me to follow her. I think we might hold the record in the community for being the two shortest eighth grade teachers in the congregation. Maybe we were very good in our shortness. I always maintained my friendship with Jeanne. When she came to Marian Hall, we were able to reconnect. That was such a blessing because once again I was able to see the real Jeanne. Even in her diminishment, what you constantly saw was her graciousness, her gratitude, her love, her deep prayer and her wonderful sense of humor. These are the things I am going to remember. I am most grateful for my days with her in New York and my days with here in Dubuque.

Maureen Hoffman, Niece

Jeanne was dear to all of us. We knew her as you knew her as an extremely organized, beautiful, strong, gracious, faithful woman. We grieved when we saw what happened to her these last few years. I want to acknowledge how the staff here took her where she was, and accepted, loved and cared for her where she was. We are so grateful for that. We felt like we were losing her, but they never did. They had her, loved her, and appreciated her wit. They lived through some hard times with her. They were so very, very good to her. I don't see staff here. I'm sure they are upstairs working, home sleeping, taking care of children, working second jobs, but we know they were there when she needed them. We are very grateful.

Sister Monica Seelman, BVM

This story is a little on the lighter side. I lived with Jeanne at St. Dorothy in Chicago from 1969 to 1975. We were all young and full of vigor and vim. One of the sisters there at the time who became Jeanne's friend was Pat Lindman, who later left the community. Pat's parents always went to Florida, so Pat got an invitation to go down to Florida and she brought Jeanne with her. This was during the era of wigs. Pat and Jeanne decided that they were going to wear a wig to Florida and they were going to look so very stylish. They get in the car to drive to the airport and get in a traffic jam. They are inching along when, all of the sudden, they are rear-ended very hard. Their wigs fly off. All the grace, attractiveness and style was gone.

Sister Lou Anglin, BVM

When I left the novitiate in the early 1990s, I went to St. Louis and stayed for twenty years. Jeanne was always a part of the extended community, which was a very fun-loving group of people. I had the great gift of working under her at St. Elizabeth of Hungary. It was one of her times being substitute principal that lasted for three years. That's when I really got to know her and come to appreciate the gentle, compassionate woman that she was. She inherited that school during a very hard time for them. She brought it along and made it such a home and community for the small parish this it was. The faculty, who really had been hurting, came together under her leadership and became great teachers, good friends, and really looked out for the children and the families in the parish. It was such a beautiful, beautiful thing that she really fostered. As the years went on with Super Bowl parties and parties for just about everything you could think of having a party for in St. Louis, we came to be there for one another. She has been such a constant in my life. I greatly appreciated her wit even to the point when, a couple of weeks ago, Karen and Margaret were watching a Cardinals game with her. I am a Cubs fan. I was a very loyal Cubs fan for my twenty years in St. Louis, which is not easy. She and I always had this running Cubs-

Cardinals thing. I gave her a little grief a couple of weeks ago when she was watching a Cardinals game, and she gave it right back. I will miss her. However, right now, she is Jeanne again and what a blessing that is. Thank you, God.

Charlotte Simon, Mount Carmel Staff

I had the privilege of serving and loving Jeanne and getting to watch the love of Jesus shine through Margaret and Karen. You are beautiful testimonies of letting Jesus' word live through your life. Jeanne used to say, "Well good, I get to see my 'Darling Charling.'" I really did appreciate that and I enjoyed serving her. I enjoy each of you precious woman here too. I hope you stay steadfast in God's word and keep glorifying God as you help each other here.

Sister Irene Lukefahr, BVM

The two friends of Jeanne that her nephew talked about were Veronica and Mary Frances Moore, who were Xavier graduates and so am I and Dee Dee Keena. When Lou mentioned Jeanne's wit, it reminded me of the day Jeanne was anointed. There were about ten sisters in her room, but she had her eyes closed. Father Barta came in and told her that we were going to anoint her. Her eyes opened and she was able to follow many of the prayers. When we began to sing, "O, God, hear us," she held her hands out as if she was directly the choir. It was so much like Jeanne; it was so precious. Keep on directing us Jeanne.

Sister Anne Kendall, BVM

I didn't know Jeanne that well, but I want to say how much I appreciate, whenever I did get into St. Louis, the wonderful hospitality of Karen, Margaret and Jeanne. It was always a good party when I was there. I so appreciate that. I also want to say thank you to Karen and Margaret for their many years of friendship with Jeanne. It has been a wonderful support.

Sister Eileen Fuchs, BVM

I am speaking as both a BVM and as a family member right now as Jeanne was principal at St. Elizabeth, the school my nieces and nephews attended. Hearing Lou talking about the turmoil beforehand, about which I don't remember much, but I do remember Jeanne being there. I do know my nieces and nephews have been praying for her. Every time I mentioned her name, they would light up. They absolutely loved her. My sister and all of my sister's cronies loved her. What I saw at St. Elizabeth was the tightknit community of which Lou just spoke. Thank you very much, Jeanne. They are still a tightknit community. I am going to bring home prayer cards for that community because they absolutely loved Jeanne. For the BVM part of me, as I was entering community, Jeanne always made me feel like an old shoe, as if I was always in the community. It was a wonderful welcoming. People have spoken about the hospitality of Karen, Margaret and Jeanne. I always felt like we had known each other forever, a very nice feeling when entering the community and feeling a little frightened. Thank you, Jeanne. We dearly love you.

John Granville, Nephew

I was driving to Chicago one time during a horrible snowstorm. I was trying to get a hold of a friend of mine with whom I was supposed to stay, but couldn't reach him. So, I dropped the dime on the sisters. They were working at Seven Holy Founders at the time. They gave me some directions. I started to drive that way and began thinking, "This is going to be an interesting neighborhood." I finally made my way to the convent and knocked on the door. There is this yapping on the other side of the door. They opened the door and the dog comes out, but doesn't really bite me. Jeanne says, "Oh, he doesn't really like men." Sweet little shih tzu Mai Tai. I stayed at the convent and had a nice evening. I go back home to St. Louis about six months later. Who greets me at the door? Mai Tai. Mai Tai has moved into my parents' home. Apparently, they couldn't have Mai Tai in Jackson, Miss. My parents took the bullet. Mai Tai and I reconciled. I just want to say how much it means to me to see Jeanne's sisters. You are a special group. God bless you.

Sister Veronica Higgins, BVM

I have a different picture of Jeanne as a family member. Concern for her sister Betty who was in the hospital. Seeing Jeanne coming around the corner with that understandable worried look. Are things OK? What will I find today? Amidst the ups and downs of family life, I saw this BVM friend. All the words and superlatives mentioned today are truly Jeanne. I'm standing in the hall outside Betty's room and things were somewhat askew. Some things needed to be attended to quickly before Jeanne got to the door. We know Jeanne to be a person of graciousness and respect and all that goes with her personality. I met Jeanne about two doors before her sister's room and said, "Jeanne, Betty's doing OK, but let me go in and freshen things up." Betty was quite entangled in her gown and trying to get herself free. This is not a picture I would want to see of a family member, nor do I want Jeanne to see it. I stepped in and said to Betty that we were just going to take care of a few things and helped her get readjusted and settled. I said, "Your sister is outside. I'm going to bring her in so you two can visit." I felt touched both ways – Jeanne Granville, the BVM and Jeanne Granville, the friend. It was a tenderhearted intersection during my life as a pastoral minister that I will never forget. I will miss her.

Sister Margaret Mary Cosgrove, BVM

I would like to acknowledge the great example of friendship set by Karen and Margaret. They loved Jeanne dearly, but when it became clear that Jeanne was ill, they did not hesitate to bring her here where they knew she would get the best available care. Then they moved here and visited her several times a day. Every afternoon they came over here to watch Jeopardy with Jeanne. It was such a true community, the three of them. They were never exclusive, but they had a bond that for which we all could hope and wish. Their selflessness in bringing Jeanne here, recognizing that this is where she needed her care. I hope that when the time comes, I can follow their example.

Sister Anne Marie McKenna, BVM

We didn't know if there would be time to include this poem that Jeanne so wanted included. In fact, Jeanne would have been happy if we did nothing but gather and read this poem. We chose not to follow her directions. I think that the line that she erased on the little handwritten note that came with this is the most telling. The erased line still said rather clearing "This is the story of my life." "The Legend of the Sparrow" by Jessica Powers.

There was a sparrow once who dreamed to fly
into the sun.
Oh, how the birds of earth set up a cry
at such imprudence in a little one
when even eagles dared not venture near
the burning stratosphere.

"She will come down within a mile or two,"
they prophesied with dread.
It was, of course, most pitifully true.
Scarce half-way up the mountain overhead
she crashed into her feathers, as they said.

But when her wings healed, up she shot again
and sought a further bough.
She was more humble and more cautious now,
after a brief novitiate of pain.

Three times she rose; twice the wind brought her down;
once her own weariness.
At last she clutched a branch in her distress

and cried, "How can I ever hope to rest
in the sun's downy nest?
I faint, I fall whatever way I go!"

But then she turned and saw the home she left
unnumbered miles below,
while just beyond her lay the mountain top,
a kerchiefed head of snow.

Nobody told her and she never guessed
that earth's last height was all that she need seek.
All winds blow upward from the mountain peak
and there the sun has such magnetic rays
that in one moment she was lifted up
into his tender blaze.

Down in the valley there was such a stir:
A sparrow reached the sun!
Why had the wind and weather favored her?
What had she ever done?
Yet since they must, they spoke the praising word,
measured her flight and paused to gasp afresh.
What was she really but a little bird,
all feather and no flesh?

Only the sun knew and the moving air
the miracle thereof:
a bird that wings itself with resolute love
can travel anywhere.