



Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

*What might have been and what has been,
Point to one end, which is always present."*
Four Quartets, T.S. Eliot

On the morning of January 21, 2012, as Sister Death tenderly accompanied our Sr. Jean on her journey home to God, we, as her sisters, along with her family members, friends and caregivers, came to understand ever more fully the mystery of God's action in the life of a very special person: *God made Sr. Jean Lenz because God loves stories.*

On May 20, 1930, Gertrude and Joseph Lenz welcomed their precious firstborn child into the world of Chicago's Southside. Baptized into Christ on June 8, 1930 at St. Martin Church, Alice Eugenia Lenz began her life-story of discipleship. A treasured daughter and a dearly beloved older sister to Ray, Jack and Trudy, Jean was recognized in her childhood and adolescence as a natural-born leader, a person of memory and vision who always had a story to tell. She attended St. Martin School and went on to complete her secondary education with School Sisters of Notre Dame at the Academy of Our Lady (Longwood). In 1948, Jean began her under-graduate studies at the College of St. Francis where she met the Joliet Franciscans. As a junior, she began to seriously consider a vocation to religious life. Inspired and encouraged by the College sisters who she came to know and love as teachers, mentors and friends, the words of Francis of Assisi began to echo in her own heart: *"This is what I wish, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart."*

On September 2, 1952, Jean became a postulant. Eleven months later on August 13, 1953, she entered the novitiate and was given the religious name, Sister Mary Alette. Soon after making her first profession on August 12, 1955, she began teaching English and Journalism at St. Francis Academy. By 1958, the year of her final profession, Sr. Alette was widely regarded as a source of inspiration for the young women whom she taught and mentored. She soon found herself appointed as the first 'Vocation Director' for the Congregation in 1962. During the exciting and turbulent years of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent years of *aggiornamento* (updating) and renewal that followed, Sr. Alette's passion for journalism, scripture and theology was evident. Following her graduate studies in journalism at Marquette University in 1965, she completed graduate theological studies at the University of Notre Dame in 1967 and additional studies at the Aquinas Institute of Theology in 1970. Most eager to apply the insights she received in several spheres of influence, Sr. Jean became a prophetic voice in formation circles, a far-sighted thinker in the Congregation's 1968 Chapter of Renewal and an innovative instructor who put in place the foundation for campus ministry at the College of St. Francis, the alma mater for which she went on to serve as a trustee for 32 years.

Alleluia!



Sister Jean Lenz, OSF

In 1973, *"two roads diverged"* and Sr. Jean *"took the one less travelled by."* After considerable discernment, she responded to an invitation from the University of Notre Dame to become the first woman rector of Farley Hall, a newly established residence for under-graduate women being admitted to the University as it became coeducational. In addition, she was invited to serve as an instructor in the Theology Department. The decision to go to Notre Dame set in motion a series of countless relationships, events and subsequent university appointments which, over the course of thirty-eight years would result in Sr. Jean becoming the Franciscan sister who encouraged and inspired generations of Notre Dame students *"to grow up and to grow deep."* In the words of Fr. Hesburgh, *"she buoyed spirits by her infectious laugh and lifted burdens by her practical efforts."* In the words of Fr. Robert Griffin, CSC, she was as *"a minor miracle worker, the campus sweetheart, who with 'tea and sympathy' would leave you strengthened like a sacrament."* As the recipient of numerous honors, awards and tributes, including an honorary doctorate from the University of Portland, Sr. Jean represented the highest ideals of her College Sisters on the Hill, the legacy of Mother Alfred Moes, and the ongoing contribution of the Joliet Franciscans to Catholic higher education.

Two mottos framed the life of Sr. Jean – that of the Congregation: *"Prima unctio et postea speculatio"* (First anointing and afterwards speculation) and that of the University of Notre Dame: *"Vita, Dulcedo, Spes"* (Life, sweetness, hope). An exemplar of radical openness to God's amazing grace, Sr. Jean embraced *the call to holiness* with joy and enthusiasm. Blessed with a listening heart, a keen intellect and a gentle sense of humor, she devoted her *life* to engaging the religious imaginations of generations of young women and men. As a Sister of St. Francis, a teacher, a mentor, a vocation director, a formator, an instructor, a rector, a colleague, an advocate, an author, an administrator and a woman religious of incalculable wisdom and grace, she brought a delightful *sweetness* to the lives of everyone she touched. Always abiding in *hope*, Sr. Jean embodied the life lesson learned from her Jesuit teacher and longtime friend, Piet Schoonenberg, SJ: *"Of course we hope in God, but God also hopes in us. God is our ultimate partner."*

Looking back on her life, Sr. Jean observed *"there has been more peace and chaos, laughter and tears, more life and death and grace than I had ever dared to imagine. So much gift!"* To the Giver of all Gifts, we give thanks for gifting us with our sister, Jean. Indeed, she was, remains and for all eternity will continue to be – so much gift.

Sister Jean Lenz, OSF
May 20, 1930 — January 21, 2012

<i>Born:</i>	May 20, 1930
<i>Parents:</i>	Joseph John Lenz and Gertrude (Mansell) Lenz
<i>Postulancy:</i>	September 2, 1952
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 13, 1953
<i>First Profession:</i>	August 12, 1955
<i>Final Profession:</i>	August 13, 1958
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	January 21, 2012

Ministry History

1955-1962	Teacher: English, Journalism, St. Francis Academy, Joliet, Illinois
1962-1966	Vocation Director: Motherhouse, Joliet
1966-1967	Graduate Study: University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN
1967-1970	Director of Postulants: St. Francis Convent, Joliet
1970-1971	Director of Formation: St. Francis Convent, Joliet
1971-1973	Instructor: Theology, College of St. Francis, Joliet
1973-1983	Rector: Farley Hall Instructor: Theology University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana
1983-1984	Rector/Chaplain: University of Notre Dame, London, England
1984-1999	Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs: University of Notre Dame
1999-2002	Sabbatical: University of Notre Dame
2002-2009	Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Notre Dame
2009-2010	University Service: University of Notre Dame
2010-2011	Pastoral Ministry: University of Notre Dame

<i>Wake:</i>	Wednesday, January 25, 2012, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Prayer Service:</i>	Wednesday, January 25, 2012, 4:30 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Mass of Christian Burial:</i>	Wednesday, January 25, 2012, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Burial:</i>	Thursday, January 26, 2012, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
<i>Interment:</i>	Section 8, Lot 361, Grave 12, Resurrection Cemetery
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	Her parents, Joseph John Lenz and Gertrude (Mansell) Lenz
<i>Survived by:</i>	Her brothers, Raymond (Ethel) and Jack (Patricia) Lenz; her sister, Trudy (Michael) Ford; nieces and nephews.

Rest in Peace, Sister Jean