



Sister Jeannine Kloeker

BORN: August 1940

ENTERED CONGREGATION: January 6, 1959

DIED: January 23, 2022

In 1986 Sister Jeannine Kloeker wrote an autobiography for admittance into a sabbatical program at St. John's Priory in Dover, Massachusetts. In one section, she wrote, "I have a lot of friends, and relationships are easy for me to form. Being a Community person has made me a good person who loves life. I have always felt that God has given me a friend whenever I was in need." On my second last visit with Jeannine, I joked with her that she was the one person in the community who had the most friends. However, in her truly humble fashion, she just said, "I don't know about that." Wherever she went, Sister Jeannine loved people, loved being in relationship with them and loved serving them as best she knew how.

Jeannine was born in 1940, the third child of five to Leo and Mary Kloeker, and grew up on a farm near Newport, Ohio. She had two older sisters and would eventually have two younger brothers. The Sisters of the Precious Blood in Russia, Ohio, were her teachers for her primary education and the Sisters from Minster came on Saturdays to Newport to teach religion. She wrote, "In the eighth grade, Sister Mary Alice Wurm was my teacher. Sister Mary Alice took a group of us to see Fatima Hall, and the seed of my future vocation was planted."

Subsequently, Jeannine left home to attend Fatima Hall in 1954. On January 6, 1959, she entered the community, and on August 15 of that same

year she received the name of Sister Leo Mary and felt especially honored as that was the combined name of her parents. In 1961, Sister Jeannine professed first vows and thus began a 40-year ministry of dietary service at the motherhouse; Lourdes Hall; the Missionaries' novitiate in Burkettsville; then at St. Charles Seminary; Maria Stein Retreat House; and finally, after her sabbatical, at St. Leonard Center in Centerville. She refers to her time at the Maria Stein Retreat House as a "happy ministry of 12 years."

Of her years in dietary ministry Jeannine wrote, "I have always striven to do the best job possible and frequently the end result was evidence that I did so." She was especially proud to have received the certification of dietary manager, granted to her by the Certifying Board for Dietary Managers.

On March 1, 2001, Sister Jeannine embarked on a new chapter in her ministerial life and became the assistant coordinator for our Sisters on Emma Hall. For her 50th Jubilee she wrote, "To say I love this ministry is an understatement. I always try to give 100 percent, but I feel I am blessed 200 percent. Being with our Sisters in their sickness, their loneliness, their needs, and when they are dying has truly been a blessing. These beautiful women have taught me so much about life and what it means to be a dedicated Sister of the Precious Blood."

In this ministry, Jeannine learned of the depth of compassion she was capable of expressing in the sacred

moments to those in physical diminishment only to later learn of her own diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. She wrote, "I had to give up being present to others in their diminishment in order to take care of my own."

In her struggle, Jeannine had to learn to let go of the many and myriad ways in which she helped others and instead had to learn to accept help from them. For her 60th Jubilee, she said, "As physical challenges began to appear, I had to struggle with maintaining a positive attitude while adjusting to new limitations."

Through it all, Jeannine, in true sports fashion gave it her all. She worked hard to stay positive, humble and kind even as she struggled and suffered more and more. She prayed hard, trusting more and more in God and letting go of her fear. One can also say she played hard by still keeping up with baseball, basketball and football in general but especially the Reds, the Flyers and the Bengals as much as she could, even as late as last Wednesday.

Sister Jeannine, throughout the game of life, put in the work and lived by a philosophy of sharing the ball with others so all can share in the win. She is starting a new season now, a season of promise and hope, of resurrection and new life free from pain and struggle. She has won and is now ready to help us and bless us from her coach's box in eternal life. Amen.

— Sister Marla Gipson