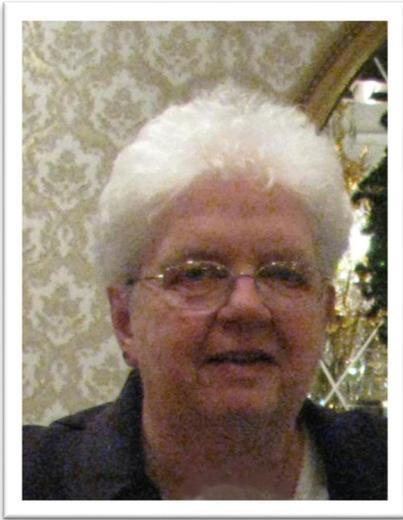


## Sister Joan Wickers

Entered eternal life on November 27, 2018



A humble person has the freedom to be wholly and completely who they are... a person who doesn't feel the need to impress anyone...one who listens to others without the need to promote themselves or their opinions... or to be in competition with others...

A humble person does nothing to draw attention to themselves but lives life in a steady, reliable, confident manner...a humble person simply strives to simply be the best version of themselves that they can be...

In a truly humble person all of these qualities exist without any fuss or bother...without any thought or effort. It's just the way they are!!.....and who they are!!!

If you knew Joan Wickers, these descriptions fit her perfectly, but let me add this which puts all of characteristics into perspective and really describes how Joan lived her entire life.

*A humble person lives not for herself but lives in and for God.*

Joan was an educator most of her religious life beginning as a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher and eventually being promoted to principal! She also was a Director of Religious Education. Joan excelled in these roles and in her quiet, unassuming but, oh, so effective way, she inspired and encouraged and influenced both students and colleagues in so many positive and meaningful ways.

Anita shared this quote with me from a catechist who served with Joan in a parish. The quote was published a lifetime ago in the Western Province Newsletter!! I think the quote shows Joan's ability at that time not only to quietly inspire others to do good things, but also gives us insight into her openness to new ways of thinking about the Church at that time, the role of the laity being one...

*"Sister Joan has a vision and sense of the role of the laity in the work of the Church...It is because of Sister Joan that I began and continue as a catechist. She helped me understand my responsibility to share in the ministry of the Church."*

Joan was a great listener. Whether one-on-one or in a group, she actively participated in her quiet, thoughtful way. But Joan had a wicked sense of humor. She was notorious for her witty and dry observations and one-liners that very often put very weighty conversations in perspective real fast. She had us laughing at our own ridiculous attempts to right the world's wrongs. Joan used an economy of words to often express some pretty profound thinking.

In the year 2000, Joan found herself in "transition" and like many of us in that situation, she struggled with the loss of a familiar, much-loved ministry and with the thought of finding and embracing something new and different.

Anita suggested she consider a position at the Villa in the Activities Department and Joan's answer was fast and furious - immediate and decisive – No way! Absolutely not!

So what changed her mind? In a word...God.

She said that after making that emphatic pronouncement that she was not interested in activities nor being in the Villa, she went to her room, sat quietly in prayer and she said that she distinctly heard the words from Hebrews 3:15 "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart..." Remember, Joan was a listener, and remember, *A humble person lives not for herself but lives in and for God.*

So, after a lifetime of being in educational settings and moving to a totally unfamiliar and alien type of venture, Joan's yes to ministry at the Villa began her loving relationship with the sisters there and her wonderful and important work as Director of the Activities Department.

Four years ago, Joan found herself again having to make a decision about coming to the Villa. But this time as a resident. And again, this decision was based solely on her profound desire to do what she believed was God's will for her at that moment.

A degenerative disease, the overwhelming sense of loss, loss of control over one's own life, one's body, movements and even thoughts, the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness - all were given over to her God, always in her low-key, almost hushed, unremarkable but yet remarkable way.

In 2013, Anita and Joan celebrated Jubilees, Joan's 60<sup>th</sup>. And she was very clear what she wanted as the theme Gratitude and Joy.

Now it's our turn to express...

- our joy for the privilege of sharing life with her
- our gratitude to her for how she has touched us by her life

Joan, we are grateful to you;

- For saying yes to God when he called you to be a sister of charity
- For your faith-filled commitment and love for the mission of our congregation to proclaim and live the gospel of Jesus Christ
- For your service to the people of God, all the people you have helped, encouraged, comforted and blessed
- For your gentleness, kindness, and charity...

Joan, we stand in gratitude to you for showing us:

- how to love family and friends unconditionally  
and
- that doing God's will is the very essence of our being

Joan, you have blessed our congregation and our lives by your presence and now your God has called you and set a place for you. Enjoy!

Sister Rosanne Caiazzo