

Sister Jacqueline Burns

Entered eternal life on August 6, 2018



Good Afternoon to each of you, to Jacqueline's Family, my family, Jacqueline's friends, colleagues and Sisters of Charity.

Joe Biden quoted an Irish saying during his recollection at his son Beau's funeral-
"Death leaves a heartache that no one can heal.

Love leaves a grace that no one can steal."

Kristan Lin, Editor of *On Being Studios* said:

"Love --in its many shades and contexts--can feel like too vast an experience to articulate with any coherence."

Well done good and faithful servant, Sister Jacqueline Burns. **Well done** daughter of Elizabeth Calmar Burns and John Burns, **good** and loving big sister of Marjorie Burns Post and Kathleen Burns Genung, **faithful** aunt of Marjorie's Children: Patty, Kathleen, Rosemary, Robert, Michael, Mary Margaret, Jacqueline, and Theresa and Kathleen's children: John, Deborah, Karen, Ellen, David, William, and Timothy, their spouses and children and great grandchildren and great, great as well, and **servant** of God's people as a Sister of Charity of Saint Elizabeth for more than 70 years.

Jacqueline was well aware of and deeply grateful for the gift of her elegantly brilliant mind. For the last eighteen months, that elegant mind was challenged, but the characteristic that never weakened was the sense of gratitude. Every individual who provided a service, no matter how simple or complex, received a soft smile and a "thank you" right up to Jacqueline's last week with us. Gratitude never left Jacqueline.

Jacqueline chose to become a Sister of Charity when she was in the third grade. She decided then that she wanted to use her gifts to help others the way the Sisters did. In third grade, Jacqueline learned in "CATECHISM" about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Corporal Works of Mercy. That elegant mind prompted her to wed them. With the Gifts of Charity/Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Mildness, Gentleness and Self-Control, Jacqueline worked to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, ransom the captive, harbor the harborless, visit the sick and bury the dead. Broadly defined, those Gifts and Works marked her life of service. For Jacqueline, the most powerful of the Gifts of the Spirit was the gift of LOVE. LOVE was the foundation of her connection to the world and to herself in that world.

And, oh how she loved! Jacqueline's advocacy for the care of the poor and underserved, especially during her service at St. Joseph's Health System, highlighted her years of diligent and unwavering determination to serve with excellence wherever her mission took her. Her years as Professor, Academic Dean and President at the College of Saint Elizabeth stood out in defining Jacqueline, the person.

Saint Vincent de Paul, Patron Saint of the Sisters of Charity, would admire Jacqueline's service. Identifying her mission and fulfilling it by doing her best with what she had was what she did every day. Every moment had a certain precision and purpose whether she was reading, prepping for a presentation, attending Mass, walking her dog - the Seeing Eye reject- Panda, her prayer time, doing the NYTimes puzzle, vacationing, dancing, speaking or otherwise communicating with friends, colleagues and family. Jacqueline seldom wasted a minute, she LOVED life and lived it with authenticity as second nature and without anxious urgency or fear. Jacqueline's enormous and limitless curiosity gave her a depth of knowledge about so many topics and that allowed her to speak intelligently, creatively and passionately with experts in science, finance, medicine, education, law, politics, the Arts and her love, History. Jacqueline's journey in Servant Leadership is her legacy. Her secret - support and believe in those doing the work and in herself.

On her 85th Birthday, late in the day, Jacqueline shared that she thought her “body and mind were failing her”. “Huh?” I said. In what way? She went on to tell me that some behavioral changes, reactions from the people around her, difficulties carrying out common tasks, etc. were troubling her. I had noticed some myself but thought her age was catching up and nothing more. “Margaret Mary, this is life and I am so blessed to have been able to work so well up to “now”. I loved my life.” She knew what was ahead and started to plan...Senile dementia had begun and Jacqueline had a new mission. She chose to leave the Motherhouse, her home for most of 60 years, to “serve” at St. Anne Villa. As she always advised those she taught, led, mentored or who asked her for guidance: “Do your best with what you have” and “Your presence counts, and don’t forget that.” She seldom forgot that advice even in the last two years of her life’s journey, and I tried not to as well.

She also during that conversation asked me to speak at her funeral. I had learned over the years of our friendship that there was no reason to question Jacqueline’s judgement even if I did not think it was best. So, despite my doubt, I said “Jacqueline I would be honored”. I did ask her what she’d like me to say. “Margaret Mary, please be sure to tell them that I loved them, each and every one of them.” So, her Sisters, family, co-workers, friends, including my family who embraced Jacqueline as a member and in turn she brought to them, warmth, support, interest in them and what they were doing, and fun, and our shore neighbors (many are here today), I ask you to remember that Jacqueline Burns loved you. Please recall a time when you engaged with Jacqueline and you experienced a moment or moments of beauty, truth and/or goodness and know again that you were loved. Jacqueline Burns loved you. I dare say that if she were here before you today, Jacqueline would encourage you to let your best self-speak, knowing that beauty, truth and goodness speak to you through others, through the Arts and through nature. She would encourage you to act from your own best nature in advocating for the poor and underserved, in taking action to address the challenges of our world near and far and to listen to the call to of the Spirit to “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you; Love one another as you have been loved; Do the right thing”.

“Wherever you are, whatever you do, be in LOVE...”(Rumi ,13th Century Muslim Poet)) as Jacqueline was in love with her God, her Church, her religious community, her family and her friends and all of nature.

Jacqueline, Sister Jacqueline was a daughter of St.Vincent DePaul, she shared and lived his mantra “Deus est Caritas” to Infinity.

Well done good and faithful servant, Sister of Charity, continue to help us be good and guide us to *do the right thing*.

“I do not know a day I did not Love you.” ~ Richard Rodgers

Margaret Mary Dalton
Sister Jacqueline’s dear friend