

## **Sister Jeanne Heiss, CSJ**

### **August 18, 1930 – June 18, 2016**

Audrey Jane Heiss, the second of five children, was born in Glenwood City, Wisconsin on August 18, 1930, to Harry J. Heiss and Grace Marie Knops. She “deeply admired her parents, loved her dad’s humor, and often spoke with fondness of her siblings, nieces and nephews.” The family home where she grew up later became the convent when St. John Baptist Parish opened the Catholic school. Audrey was a member of this parish, attended Glenwood City Grade School and summer catechism classes taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph from Superior, WI. Upon graduation she moved on to complete three years of high school at St. Joseph’s Academy, a boarding school in Crookston, MN which was also staffed by Sisters of St. Joseph.

Following God’s invitation to “Come, follow me,” Audrey entered the Nazareth-on-the-Lake Sisters of St. Joseph, Superior, WI on September 8, 1948. She received the Habit on March 19, 1949 and was given her religious name, Sister Mary Jeanne. She completed her high school requirements at the Junior College in the Motherhouse in Superior, WI where she pronounced First Vows on March 19, 1951 and Final Vows, March 19, 1954.

Sister Jeanne pursued educational courses at The University of Wisconsin-Superior; College of St. Scholastica, Duluth; River Falls State College; and St. Catherine’s College, St. Paul in preparation for the teaching profession. For 18 years her ministry took her to primary grade classrooms in the parish schools in Superior, New Richmond and River Falls, WI. She seemed to love teaching, and with a twinkle in her eye, a good sense of humor and a quick wit, delighted in sharing stories of some of the antics and funny things the children said and did out of their innocence - much to the enjoyment of the other Sisters.

In 1965 Sister Jeanne changed careers. Always an avid cook and baker, she ministered in the dietary department at St. Joseph’s Hospital, Superior for two years, but she felt drawn to the direct healthcare of patients. After completing the two-year licensed practical nurses training at Indianhead Technical Institute, Superior, WI, 1967-68, she joined the nursing staff at Holy Family Hospital, New Richmond, to minister to the sick and elderly. While there, she also used her culinary skills. Many mornings found her up very early to bake muffins or other items for hospital employee morning breaks. She would also prepare noon meals for the Child Care Center in New Richmond. Earlier in her life, she had demonstrated her cooking skills at the Diocesan Retreat House in Northern Wisconsin. Sister Jeanne was also “an excellent seamstress and made several of her own clothes; she loved bright colors.”

After about twelve years at Holy Family Hospital, Sister Jeanne took her nursing and caregiver skills to various ministries in the St. Paul area: Bethesda Hospital, HealthEast St. Joseph’s, Sisters Care and Clare House AIDS ministry. Always kind, generous, and solicitous of others, her patient care can best be described in her own words: “As a nurse, a Christian and a Sister of St. Joseph, my challenge is to be sensitive to our patients’ needs and do all I can to rejoice with them or ease their pain and apprehension. I make a conscious effort to find the patient with

special needs. I pray that my efforts, joined with Jesus' offering, are sensitive and responsive, bringing love and comfort to our patients."

In 1986, the majority Sisters of St. Joseph from Superior, WI, chose to become part of the St. Paul Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. After Sister Jeanne's ministries in healthcare and volunteer work in INSTEP ended, she continued to use her culinary skills in the food service for Respite Care/INSTEP/Carondelet Center, and became the baker for Carondelet Center. Here she continued, with pride in her work, to delight others with her cooking skills - especially the caramel rolls!

Following retirement and open heart surgery, Sister Jeanne moved to Bethany and was among the first occupants of Carondelet Village. There, though her physical condition did not allow her to be very active, she used her energy in many ways for others. One example was that at certain times the two-bedroom apartment she shared with another Sister was used to display give-away items for the benefit of others to come in and take.

As witnessed above, Sister Jeanne was deeply committed to her religious call to service throughout her religious life. She was also a faithful friend and most appreciative to her CSJ congregation, family and many friends for all of their love and support over the years.

In the Novitiate at Nazareth-on-the-Lake, Superior, words were put to the melody of the Bells of St. Mary\*. One line says, "And in their Novitiate they'll learn how to serve Him." As one friend of Sister Jeanne's remarked: "She is an example of a true servant of God. He called an[d] she served!" Sister Jeanne is an example of a Belle of St. Joseph, faithful to God's call to the end, using her many gifts and talents in service of the People of God for the greater honor and glory of God. May she hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant .... come on in and share my happiness..." (Mt 25:21 paraphrase)... and receive the reward prepared for you from all eternity." (Mt 25:34 paraphrase)

Jeanne was preceded in death by her parents, Grace and Harry Heiss, her brothers, William and Robert, her brothers-in-law, John Steiner and Frank Kessel. She is survived by her maternal aunt, Betty (Fred) Barilla, sisters Judy Steiner and Yvonne Kessel, her sister-in-law, Gladys, many nieces and nephews and grandnieces and grandnephews, and the Sisters of St. Joseph and Consociates.

A Mass of Christian Burial honoring Jeanne and her life was celebrated June 27, 2016, in Our Lady of the Presentation Chapel at St. Joseph's Provincial House, 1880 Randolph Avenue. Interment was at Resurrection Cemetery, Mendota Heights, MN.

\*The Belles of St. Joseph at sweet eventide  
Shall call Thee beloved to come to His side  
And out of the world they shall come one and all  
To give up their worldly gifts to follow His call.

The Belles of St. Joseph. Ah! hear they are calling  
The young loves – the true loves – who come from afar  
And in their Novitiate they'll learn how to serve Him  
Their prayers will convert souls to love Him more and more.