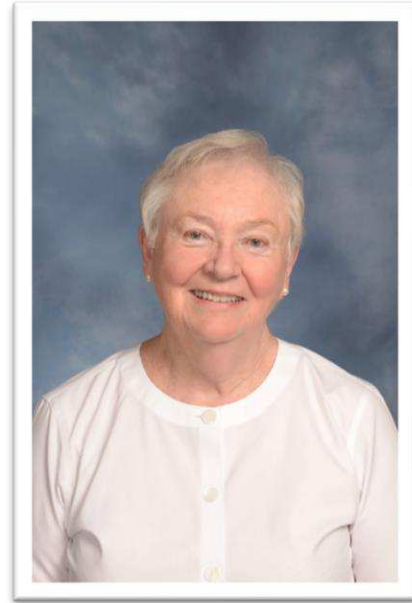


Remembering Juliana (Julie) Casey, IHM
Oct. 19, 1940 – Dec. 29, 2022

“There is something about a call
That changes us,
Won’t let us go.”

These excerpts from the homily Julie gave at the 2006 IHM Jubilee celebration capture Julie’s fidelity to her life journey. Each of the calls in her life changed her and wouldn’t let her go.

“There is the call of birth,
The cry to “live.”
There is the call,
Echoed in flowing water, in light and salt, to
“live now in God
Live now with others.”



Juliana Marguerite Casey was born Oct. 19, 1940. Julie was the youngest of four children born to Marguerite Hourigan and David Casey. She had two sisters, Nancy and Pat, and one brother, David, who was known as Jim. Julie asked me one day, “Have I ever told you how I got my name?” One of Julie’s sisters had health issues and while pregnant with Julie her mother went to see Fr. Solanus Casey, OFM. Fr. Casey assured Julie’s mother that her sister would be OK. He also said that if the baby in her mother’s womb was a boy, he should be named Raymond and if a girl, Juliana, both patron saints of Solanus.

Julie grew up in Detroit, attending Holy Redeemer for grades one through three, followed by St. Mary of Redford for grades four through 12. Following high school, Julie attended Marygrove College and earned a bachelor’s degree in French. Following her graduation, Julie pursued studies at the University of Michigan and earned a master’s degree in French. In 1984, Julie received an Honorary Doctorate from Marygrove College, which recognized her writings focusing on the role of women in the Church and her tireless devotion to and work for peace, including her work on the Bishop’s Advisory Committee for the Peace Pastoral.

“There is something about a call ...
Each of these calls and all of these
Have hints of the Spirit in them.
They invite us to choose,
Who we will be,
What we will do.”

Julie shared that there are four key events or messages that she experienced in her life. The first occurred while a student at Marygrove and involved Marie Hopkins, IHM, as one of her professors. Julie acknowledged that Marie was not a favorite teacher of many, but one day she noticed that Marie was looking out the window of the classroom. The look on Marie’s face was that of contentment and peace. Julie wanted “what she had” - the gift of peacefulness and happiness with the call in her life.

In 1964, Julie responded to God's call to enter the IHMs. Julie readily indicated that this was not what she expected. In fact, she said, "I had done everything to avoid joining. No one looked at me and thought I should become a nun," including her family. Julie admits that, although she described herself as not a holy novice, from the moment she arrived in Monroe, she knew she was home.

The second lesson that Julie learned was trust. Often within our busyness we forget that we need to trust. She told a story of a time when she was in a restaurant with some friends. A little boy of age three or four came over and asked her to button his coat. Julie recognized that this was a tender moment that demonstrated complete trust in her. It was a perfect lesson as it called Julie to recognize the call to trust in God's journey in her life.

Julie was always clear that she did not want to talk about her career. Rather, she was willing to share about her vocation and the ministries in which she was called to serve. Following her novitiate, Julie taught French at St. Mary Academy. She had hopes of being involved in the house of prayer movement, but when Margaret Brennan, IHM, asked her to be one of the sisters trained in theology, she began studies at the prestigious University of Louvain in Belgium. As the third woman to attend the university, which had been all male since 1425, Julie received Ph.D. and STD degrees there.

Julie's ministerial journey began as a full-time professor of New Testament studies at St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana. She indicated that she was the only full-time woman in a "church institution," which required patience and a sense of humor from her. One time, knowing of her background in the New Testament, I asked what her favorite scripture reading was and without missing a beat, Julie said, "I swim in the scriptures."

The third message that Julie spoke of was that God is always present in her life. This was the most important thing in her life. Following her teaching at St. Meinrad Seminary, Julie was elected provincial of the Northeast Province. She felt called to this ministry with her firm belief that women religious are the single most hopeful group in the Roman Catholic Church in terms of making the Vatican II declaration that the Church is the people of God. She recognized that this ministry brought amazing grace to her life. Julie was provincial when John Clement Hungerman, IHM, was shot and killed while walking home from Marygrove. She found this a time to be with people who are suffering. Julie spoke of the journey she made with several of our IHM Sisters that were dealing with difficult circumstances in their lives and Julie stood in awe of their courage.

While serving in provincial leadership, Julie was invited to be a consultant to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to write a pastoral letter on peace. Julie was at that time the only woman consultant and she mused, "There was no line at the restroom!" The result was a publication in May 1983, entitled, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response."

Following a year of renewal and writing, Julie was led to serve in the health care ministry. She served with the Catholic Health Association in Education/Spiritual Development, vice president for Mission Services and as Executive vice president of Eastern Mercy Health System. In this role, she directed mission efforts from Maine to Florida, forming sponsors, boards of trustees and executives in the Gospel call to care for the sick and vulnerable. Following this ministry, Julie served as vice president for Mission Integration for Catholic Health East (CHE). In Julie's own words, she felt called to the ministry of health care in a corporate world and bringing the

insights of feminism (mutuality, collaboration, sensitivity, tenderness) to bear within the Association and in the work for the health care ministry. Julie brought her theology acumen as well as her teaching and writing skills to help in the formation of leaders in the ministry of Catholic health care. She supervised a volunteer project that sent medical volunteers to Haiti, Jamaica, Peru, Brazil, and Guatemala. While working as a private consultant, Julie was appointed as a canonical sponsor, and later the chairperson of the board of the Providence St. Joseph Health Sponsors (PSJH) Council.

One of her colleagues from CHE, Bill Healy, remembers traveling with Julie to meet with the leadership of a congregation. Bill described this meeting as appearing to be contentious. Julie delicately and patiently engaged the sponsors in a way that transformed the spirit in the room from caution and tension to trust and goodwill. Another colleague from CHE, describes the job interview he had with Julie over lunch. When he shared that he was Jewish, Julie spoke to him in Hebrew.

Bill Cox, Chairperson of the PSJH board expressed “deep gratitude for Julie’s manifold contributions to health care, housing and foreign ministries during [her] years of servant leadership as a PSJH sponsor. [Julie] brought to the work practical wisdom, theological depth, and an appreciation for the lived experience of individuals and communities; all infused with [her] rich poetic sensibility. [PSJH] benefited greatly from [Julie’s] presence and gifts.”

Julie was a prolific author of numerous articles and two books for Catholic Health Association: *Food for the Journey* (1991) and *Voices from the Journey* (2015). It is worth noting that *Food for the Journey* has been in print since 1991 and remains one of the key texts used to form health care leaders of the future.

These calls invite us
In all the days of our lives,
To live, to grow,
To welcome grace, survive pain, stumble in life’s darkness,
Dance in life’s mystery.

Julie exemplified a strong commitment to living her life fully. This call invited Julie to be open to the movement of the Spirit in her life. During times of darkness in her life, Julie committed herself to find the light. As she retired from her service with the Providence St Joseph Health Council, Julie indicated on her Ministry Commitment Form that she hoped to focus on the contemplative aspect of her life, living that call until the day she died. Unfortunately, when she decided to retire, cancer entered her life and caused her to go more deeply into the trust of our loving God. Her declining health brought her to live in the IHM Senior Living Community in 2020.

The fourth and final message of Julie is to remind us that we all need a sense of humor. Tied to this final message was also the support that Julie experienced with her family and the IHM community. Her nieces and nephews played a huge role in her life, and she expressed her desire to say “thank you” for all you have done. Throughout her life, family and community members have been a great source of strength and help, particularly at this period of her life.

Before Julie entered the community, she was on a plane and looked out the window and prayed, “Loving God is my deepest desire.” Julie had unwavering faith until her last breath. When Fr. Tom Lumpkin anointed Julie and said, “You are crossing over and Jesus is with you, Julie broke out in a wonderful smile. That smile continued to be present whenever the caregivers entered her room. In Julie’s book, *Voices from the Journey*, she gives the

perspective of the various health care workers, beginning with the housekeepers. While Julie spoke highly of the care that she received, she particularly commented on the ministry of the housekeepers.

Bill Cox, in his letter also said, “Julie, you are for us and all who know you that ‘pearl of great price’ described in Mathew’s Gospel. Pearls are symbolic of wisdom gained through experience. It is also said that these little gemstones are symbolic of the wearer’s loyalty, generosity, integrity and purity.” Julie had a unique way of being totally present to each person. Her gentleness and her kind, gentle way of affirming and offering an alternative perspective that acknowledged the good in each of us were special gifts she offered. Julie was available to others in so many ways – going back to when she taught at the Academy, and she helped another sister with French as she prepared for her doctoral studies.

And, finally,
We say Thank You
To the God who called you to this community
And so, blessed us with life.
Life beyond our dreams.
There is something about a call
More than we will ever know ...
More than we can ever speak ...

Anytime I visited Julie during these past years, she had an “attitude of gratitude.” She assured me that she was at peace and that she was happy. During these years, Julie embraced letting go on every level. She often talked and live the spirit of surrendering that is to cease fighting everything and everyone, trusting in our loving God. I am sure that her smile that often greeted us was present when she was greeted by her parents, sisters and brother, and all who have gone before her as she was embraced by our loving God.

Julie wanted this Remembering to come from her. She shared with me a quote from Frederick Buechner that is her final message to us.

When you remember me, it means you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.

***Written and delivered by Mary Jane Herb, IHM
Jan. 4, 2023***