



Sharing of Memories of Joyce M. Cox, BVM (Petrine)

Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, Oct. 28, 2022

Sister Mary Healey, BVM

In 1949, I entered the BVMs with seven classmates and two older St. Mary girls about whom our teachers had told us. Joyce Cox was the first postulant whose name I learned because her fingernails were dark green, and she had used the same nail polish to paint the plastic rims of her glasses. With her blond hair, it was very attractive.

Sister Linda Roby, BVM

For many years the license plate on Joyce's car read "BVM JOY". That was an apt description of what she brought to every person and place she served. Joyce *loved* being a BVM, and our spirit and charism exuded from her! Her gift of affirmation convinced so many people of their own gifts and goodness, sending them on to share their own joy with the world. Thank you, dear friend, for all the joy that we shared together.

Sister Mary Healey, BVM

I had forgotten this memory until I walked into the chapel today and it came to me very clearly. When we were young, the chapel had rows of two-person pews on each side. When Joyce and I were received as novices, we were paired as partners to clean the chapel. As it happened, Joyce and I worked together a lot. Our next job was as servers in the dining room. When we worked in the laundry on Mondays, I was in charge of the mangled cloths table and Joyce was my assistant. We just seemed to turn up together all the time. Anyhow, there were about a dozen of us to dust every inch of the pews every day. When we started, Joyce and I, got down on our knees and worked our way up the aisle dusting all the pews. We decided that what we were doing was not terribly efficient, so we worked it out ergonomically the most efficient way to hit every inch of every pew. We finished our row before the other rows, so we taught them our method. After we finished, we had time to take a shower. With the effort we put in, we really needed a shower. That worked well for a while until some novice reported to SM Jean Gabriel that we were finishing the job so quickly that we couldn't be doing it right. She called us all together and sent us up to clean the pews again. We couldn't find anything dirty. We had learned our lesson. We continued to use our scientific method for cleaning the pews, but we just didn't do it as fast.

Virginia Forte, Friend & Former BVM

A good friend for almost 60 years, Joyce also became a vital part of the Forte Family where I was known as "Gina". It was because of this that I became known as "Gina" to many in the BVM Community. Joyce and I lived together at St. Thomas More in San Francisco in the 1960s and she would frequently come to Seattle for home visits. During this time, she endeared herself to my mother, Virginia, and was especially supportive to her and my family when my father died in 1967. Throughout the following years, Joyce was considered a part of our immediate family and our extended Italian family.

As fate would have it, in the early 1970s we ministered and lived together at Mundelein College in Chicago. One of my fondest memories during that time was the drive we took to the Carmelite Monastery in Pewaukee, Wis., where we visited with Sister Miriam of the Holy Spirit, the poet Jessica Powers. Joyce's deep spirituality could be found in many of Jessica's writings. It was an inspiration to me to witness Joyce's contemplative prayer and spirit deepen throughout her life. Many can attest to her sharing of this contemplative spirit in the midst of her outgoing ministries.

She brought her Montana roots to the Northwest, and they were nourished here through her love of nature and all the beauty of the mountains that surrounded her. She cherished her frequent times of retreat and vacations spent at the ocean. Her photography captures much of this beauty, especially the roses.

And so, Joyce, I sent you off with Jessica Powers' words from "Homecoming."

*The spirit, newly freed from earth,
is all amazed at the surprise
of her belonging suddenly
as native to eternity
to see herself, to realize
the heritage that lets her be
at home where all this glory lies.*

Anthony Forte

Sister Joyce was a wonderful, valued member of my entire family for many, many years. It was great to have her at our family events and she provided a great perspective on life and the world supported by the strong faith she lived. As a lifelong Seattle area resident, I know her impact on Catholic education will be felt in a lasting way. Goodbye to one great Lady!

Sister Mary Martens, BVM

My two brief memories of Joyce have to do with her love of the Northwest and her love of creation. It really speaks to her sense of hospitality. As far as I know, just about any time a BVM who was not native or missioned in the Northwest visited the Seattle area, she was warmly welcomed by Joyce. The two memoirs both involve her love of Puget Sound as a grand place to take a ferry and see some of the many islands that were home to her. The first time was a very long weekend, about five days. We went out on a ferry into the Sound and visited some of the islands. The highlight was sitting on one of the islands where the ocean water came in and mixed with lake water. The second memory was watching a whale breach the water from one of those rubber rafts, not from a cruise ship, almost in the water ourselves. The second time I was in the area, Joyce made a point of driving to SeaTac Airport and picking me up and taking me out to Bellingham. That's over a hundred miles, close to two hours of driving time. The same trip, she picked me up at the University of Washington and took me back to SeaTac via a different path.

Rosemary Forte

I have known Sister Joyce for 55 years, ever since the first family visit with my sister, Virginia (Gina). Soon Sister Joyce became a part of our family and helped us all in every aspect of our lives.

I think the most amazing attribute of Sister Joyce was her ability to *connect* with everyone from 2 to 82, two-legged and four-legged, Christian or Jew, black or white. I saw her as teacher, principal, psychologist, theologian, advocate for women's rights and eliminating human trafficking. Hers was a life-giving work for everyone wherever she went. She was a joy to be around because she was so *genuine* and always took an interest in you. She had boundless energy buzzing around Seattle in her white Prius with personalized license plates that read "BVM JOY."

She loved the Pacific Northwest, especially Mount Rainier, the Oregon coast and Canon Beach, but always dear to her heart were the Bitterroot Mountains near Butte where she grew up. She loved snow skiing, watching football and was an avid reader.

My mother loved visits from Sister Joyce. I'm sure they are enjoying a heavenly visit. I would like to express my gratitude to the BVM community and Mount Carmel Bluff for their compassionate care during her last days at Mount Carmel.

Father Jeffery Moore, Seattle

I would like to reiterate again how thankful our archdiocese is for Sister Joyce's decades of service to us. I've heard from many chancery employees who remember her or see her name on all the document they are still working with. It's just a real joy to be able to celebrate her today. My brief memory of Sister Joyce was when I was a nothing seminarian, pre-theology, early in the process, nobody knew me. The chancery in Seattle has this very narrow parking garage that's impossible to navigate their concrete pillars that are just trying to destroy your car at every corner. I was backing my mother's minivan into one of these spots and I hit the car next to me. I was thinking, was it the archbishop, was it different clergy, how much trouble am I in. I look over, and there it was right on the car – BVM JOY. I knew I was in more trouble than with the archbishop. At the time Sister Joyce was the head of Catholic schools. I left a note at the front, "I'm very sorry I left the scuff on your car. I'm happy to pay for whatever repair you need." My favorite part of this is that I get a call a few days later. She didn't want my money; that was not something she was interested in. She called and she said, "I have a bottle of touchup paint. Why don't you come to the chancery and fix the mistake?" This was not an option. This was not a "you can pay for this" or "you can touch it up". This was a "this is what you are going to do." It speaks to her character. Even as the head of Catholic schools, after being director of this and assistant of that and everything else, she never stopped being a teacher. She wanted me to learn. She wanted me to have a tangible experience of what I had brought into the world. I've always appreciated that spirit that continued with her everywhere she went.

Colleen (Carr) Wartelle, Sister of Sister Deanna Marie Car, BVM

Joyce was a good friend. She was interested in what we Carr girls were doing; what our children and grandchildren were doing; and in my case, she was interested in our parish here in Everett, Wash., and in the parish school. Our daughter-in-law is principal of the parish school and Joyce knew the challenges of her job well and lent support and advice whenever we asked for it.

I remember with gratitude when she was the keynote speaker at a fundraising breakfast held here to support the parish school. She drove up from Seattle very early in the morning. She was both enthusiastic and entertaining as she spoke to the group gathered sharing memories and lessons learned from her time as principal of a local Catholic high school for boys.

If her presence or support could help a good cause, Joyce was there. She brought life to any gathering and courage to any challenge. She was serious, understanding, and fun as was called for by the occasion. We will miss her.

Sister Gwen Farry, BVM

I first met Joyce in the early 1970s when I was in a program at USF (University of San Francisco) which required five week-long courses over a two-year period. Joyce not only provided hospitality at St. Thomas More, but also offered the use of a car each day - a car with the California license plate BVM JOY. A few years later Joyce came to St. Clare In Portland, Ore., to help us interpret results of Myers-Briggs and Enneagram surveys. We were in the same northwest cluster for more than twenty years, including seven when we both lived in Seattle, where she continued to drive with BVM JOY plates. Most recently, I became more aware of her spirit of gratitude, as well as joy. We will miss you, Joyce.

Bishop George Leo Thomas, Bishop of Las Vegas, Former Archbishop of Seattle

I am grateful to God for the life, love, and legacy of Sister Joyce Cox. I was privileged to work closely with her during her years of service in the Archdiocese of Seattle. Sister Joyce was a deeply gifted woman and true disciple of Jesus Christ. She was a woman endowed with a keen mind and generous heart, a courageous spirit and creative imagination. Sister Joyce poured out her life and humble service among God's people, undaunted by the many challenges that accompany archdiocesan leadership. She was buoyant and optimistic, a friend of the underdog, a competent educator, and a wise and witty woman. "What was her best quality?" you may ask. She hailed from Butte, America.

Kristin Dixon, Archdiocese of Seattle

Poetry and a parka. Two gifts that Sister Joyce bestowed on my family before she moved from Seattle to Mount Carmel. Sister Joyce and I often shared our most recent poetry finds with one another over lunch. Poetry sparked fresh ideas and gave words to shared emotions or experiences. I recall one of her favorite poems from the book she gave to me, *The Collected Poems of Denise Levertov*. "The Annunciation" – "Consent, courage unparalleled, opened her utterly." Like the poem, Sister Joyce modeled for me a "yes" to any role she was asked to play. The warm down parka, given to my very pregnant daughter; a coat that wrapped my daughter in its warmth. To this day, she wears it, and instead of a North Face jacket. I feel Sister Joyce's encouraging and protective hug.

Sister Joyce offered me friendship and accompaniment as I stepped into the Office for Catholic Schools in Seattle. Sister Joyce encouraged me to identify how I could contribute to the leadership in our Catholic schools. She offered honest feedback based in the wisdom learned from all her years working in her many roles at the Chancery and beyond. Like the poem, Sister Joyce modeled for me a courageous "yes!" to whatever role she was asked to play. I treasure the gift that she was to me and to the Archdiocese of Seattle!

Father Gary Zender, Pastor at St. Louise in Bellevue, WA, Vicar for Clergy for the Archdiocese of Seattle

Sister Joyce was an amazing leader in the Archdiocese of Seattle. She was supportive to those who struggled and challenged those who became overly concerned with their own preservation. She guided and led us with wisdom and good humor. I can see her smile and hear her laugh as I write this memory of her! We are grateful for her many years of ministry with us!

Sam Keller, Facilities Manager, Archdiocese of Seattle

In the brief time I had with Sister Joyce, she and I laughed every time we got together. I am still in awe of how she could walk into an uncomfortable situation, seemingly grab everyone by the ankles, shake them with fury, and walk away with everyone thinking that she shone light on the situation. I think what she was so great at was getting people to leave themselves behind for the greater good. The spirit of Sister Joyce is an awesome gift.

Sister Eileen Healy, BVM

My niece and nephew were at St. Thomas More when Joyce was the principal. My sister was at a mothers' club meeting. To say that they had a challenging pastor would be an understatement. The mothers' club really supported the school. That's what they do wherever we have been. The pastor asked Joyce why she was at the meeting since she wasn't one of the mothers. All the mothers were really shocked that anyone would say that to the principal of the school, to a sister. He did not anticipate the support that his slight gave to Joyce from the mothers' club. From that point on, if she asked for anything, she was pretty sure to get it. The mothers' club was going to support her and make sure she didn't have to deal again with that pastor.

Sister Carol Marie Baum, BVM

I first met Joyce at the Portland Senate over a drink after one of our end-of-the-day sessions. Joyce loved a good conversation and at the same time was an expert drawing out persons she was talking to, what they thought on certain topics, how they felt regarding a certain comment that was made or what could be done to change the situation that was being discussed. Joyce was an avid reader, delightful conversationalist, interested in the issues happening in the world, church and at home. Joyce showed gratitude for all that she received as a BVM in making her the person she is today.

Her time in the northwest was treasured as she went about sharing her faith with those she met along the way. She had a great sense of humor and knew how to relax in the simplest of ways. Her time living at Mount Carmel gave her the chance to share with her sisters and those who came through the Caritas door as she often took the desk for the on-duty receptionist to take a break or get a lunch period. Quite often she would be the "go to" gal if a sub was needed at the desk for any reason.

Joyce's move to Gables was one of her biggest challenges as her health continued to be problematic and she was less interactive with her friends due to COVID restrictions. As Joyce continued to give her best in dealing with the changes in her health, she came to accept that her physical ability was lessening. Joyce, now you are free of any limitations and finally home. Thank you for sharing your life with me. What a gift.

Sister Anne Buckley, BVM

I didn't really know Joyce when she was in Seattle; I never lived with her. When she came to Gables, she greeted me, and I'm sure everybody like a dearest friend. I know Gables must have been a challenge, but she didn't let that show. She was just joyous. I am overwhelmed, first, by her journey to Catholicism, and then to the BVMs. Her whole life was about taking every opportunity. Still, she was always Joyce.

Mary Ann Fremgen, Former BVM

I first met Joyce when I was teaching at St Timothy's in St Louis. She was one of the BVM education commissioners and she was extremely present and helpful to us. We had just hired the first layman principal and we were becoming a pilot school. She encouraged us to be more non-graded and taught us to do cross-grade sharing.

After moving to Dubuque, Joyce and I got reacquainted. When I began volunteering with my dog Bronx, if Joyce saw us, she would exclaim, "My dog!" This became a kind of greeting for her. When Joyce moved to Gables, she was excited to have Bronx, "her dog" on her lap every week. Upon leaving, Joyce would tell us, "Peace and joy!" So, I say, dearest Joyce, peace and joy!

Dae McBride Hannah, Former BVM

I have a little story about Sister Joyce Cox (Petrine). I think there was only one other Petrine. Sister Mary Petrine McBride who died in 1949 and was my dad's first cousin. After her death, her mother Elizabeth McBride received a letter from a novice asking if it would be OK to ask for the name Petrine because it was so soon after her daughter's death. And from what the family told me, her mother said yes. Her granddaughter said her grandmother thought it was so kind to ask. An interesting story of her name and just a bit of history.

Patrick Ryland

Sister Joyce supported me in discovering my vocation. She witnessed the Love of God to me at a critical time of my life. She listened to me with an open heart and, after hearing my desire for a deeper prayer life, with generosity she paid my first year's subscription to the daily devotional Give Us This Day. My life has been forever changed by God's Word coming through this channel. Thank you, Sister Joyce.

Steve

Sister Joyce is a "legend" in so many ways in the Archdiocese of Seattle. She served in so many different ministries and was gracious in all of them. We were sorry to see her leave the archdiocese when she returned to Dubuque. May the angels lead her to Paradise.

Valerie Lesniak

Joyce was a spirit-led woman who cared deeply about others! Her accomplishments are many! She loved good fun, ocean shores, and trips to the casinos every now and then! I will remember her fondly and our many meaningful conversations. I will miss her.

Anita Goin

I am forever grateful for having Sister Joyce in my life and for learning from her. May eternal joy be hers.

Peter Mills

Please make more nuns as strong and kind as Sister Joyce! The world is a better place because of the work of the BVMs. You all are in our hearts! Thank you and may God bless Sister Joyce and all who loved her.