



In Loving Memory

Sister Mary Isaac Jogues Rousseau, SSND

In this afterglow of the Easter Season, it's easy to think of the friends of Jesus getting together to remember his life – as he asked them to do – to re-tell stories – to carry the message of Good News that God is Love. There were too many stories, of course – which led the evangelist John to end his account with the words: “Now, there are many other things that Jesus did. If they were all written down one-by-one, I suppose that the whole world could not hold the books that would be written.” I identify with John at this moment. What to write down? What to say? But John did begin, and that's what we must do now. In the beginning...

Birth
January 13, 1921

Baptism
January 15, 1921

Profession
July 17, 1941

Death
June 11, 2014

Burial
Notre Dame of
Elm Grove Cemetery
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

On January 13, 1921, Marjorie was born at St. Mary's Hospital, Green Bay. Her father, Moses Joseph, at the time his first child was born was principal of the public school at Suamico, Wisconsin. Her mother, Eva Marie [Brault] Rousseau was a wonderful homemaker. In a letter to novice Marjorie years later, her mother would write, “I think that to serve my family is the nicest thing I can do.” She was able to write that even though she had a first-born who was, quote, “into everything.” Marjorie remembered her mother telling of the time she climbed onto her little pink chair and pushed her apple pies off the counter into the dishwasher.

When Marjorie was two years and two months old, Rosemary was born; Eunice came along when Marjorie was almost four. She recalled, “Together, Rosemary, Eunice and I spent many happy years.” For a time the Rousseau family lived next to the parish church and the sisters' convent in Wrightstown, Wisconsin. As soon as she saw the sisters, Marjorie determined to be one. She went over to the convent to apply when she was four or five. “When you are sixteen you may come,” was the reply. Marjorie wrote later, “That thought went with me through life and from that moment on I took my vocation for granted. ‘When I am sixteen I will be a Sister.’”

She was seventeen, not sixteen as she had planned, when she entered Notre Dame on August 27, 1938. She spent two years in the candidature under Sister Seraphia's guidance, until she was received on July 16, 1940 and given the name, Isaac Jogues. “‘Isaac means sacrifice and laughter,’ I told Mother after the services because she wasn't so sure that she liked my new name.”

In July, 1941, she took her first vows and was assigned immediately to teach primary grades at SS. Peter and Paul, Milwaukee. Six years and two more schools convinced both Sister Isaac Jogues (I.J.) and her superiors that she was not cut out to be a primary teacher. When she was assigned in 1947 to teach Latin at the Academy of Our Lady in Chicago she knew she had found her place. Latin, her first undergraduate major, would continue to be a great love of her life.

In 1953, she began doctoral work in Greek and Latin at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C., receiving her Ph.D. in 1958. During her years at Catholic University, I.J. spent time at the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris working with the 11th century archdeacon and poet, Fulcoius' original manuscript, which she researched and translated from the Latin for her dissertation, a huge task and recognized success.

*Precious and blessed is
the death of the faithful
before God... for
they die in union with
their dear Jesus, in the
grace of God, in peace.*

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger
Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
Letter 11, September 10, 1831

continued

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*Sister Mary Isaac Jogues
Rousseau*



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**School Sisters
of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

Fresh from her doctoral studies, I.J. began her teaching career at Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, in 1958. For the next ten years she served as professor and later as chair in the classics department with her dear colleague, Sister Dorothea Diederich. During this time she also taught six summers in the classics division at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

In her “spare time” I.J. continued her scholarly work studying at Harvard, at the Institute for Teacher Trainers of Latin at the University of Minnesota, and at the American Classical League Institute at Oxford, Ohio. Her publications include 13 articles on authors, literature and hymnology for the New Catholic Encyclopedia and articles on Medieval Latin for the *Corpus Instrumentorum*.

Beginning in 1968, Sister I.J. taught Greek to seminarians at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Among the seminarians at that time was Timothy Dolan who later was appointed Archbishop of Milwaukee and, most recently, of New York. I.J. and “Tim” have remained friends over the years. And she would say, even in those early days we knew he would be bishop!

From 1975 to 1981, Sister Isaac Jogues served as Mount Mary’s dean of students – which at that time included almost everything not academic, like the residence hall. She loved the students and made it a point to know as many as possible. During her tenure as dean, she initiated Campus Ministry, Career Development and Minority Counseling.

She was appointed director of alumnae relations in 1981 and served in that capacity for ten years. Among other innovations, she established the Marian Club, honoring Mount Mary alums of 50 years. As she retired from the alumnae office, Sister Isaac Jogues was awarded Mount Mary’s Madonna Medal for Outstanding Service. In that year she also received the honorary title, professor emerita.

Sister Isaac Jogues then served in the SSND Generalate house in Rome from 1991 to 1993. While there she tutored international students in English and worked with 24 seminarians, many from India and from African countries, helping them as they wrote their dissertations. In 1995 she returned to Mount Mary to continue her tutoring career in the Academic Resource Center and to help international students with English.

In 2004, I.J. received state-wide acclaim when she was chosen the “Packer Fan of the Year.” Sister Isaac Jogues officially retired from Mount Mary in May of 2008 after 50 years of service. She moved to Notre Dame of Elm Grove after breaking her hip, and in 2011, moved to Our Lady of the Angels in Greenfield, Wisconsin. She died peacefully at Our Lady of the Angels on June 11, 2014.

Sister Mary Isaac Jogues Rousseau is survived by her sister, Rosemary (Wilfred) Stein, nieces, nephews, other relatives, friends and the SSND Community.

John had to finish his stories of Jesus! I have to end this brief account of I.J.’s amazing life, but John knew he didn’t have to say everything then – that the stories would continue. The Good News would be spread. I know that each of you carries stories, memories. And of course, each one of us in our lives is I.J.’s true eulogy. Everything can’t be said now – the entire day wouldn’t be long enough. So I must stop talking, knowing that I.J.’s life goes out to all the world through all of us. Let us continue to be Good News as she was.

By Sister Joanne Poehlman, SSND