



Sister Joan Byrne SNJM

June 18, 1932 - March 5, 2023

Albany_ Sister Joan Byrne (Sr. Jean Adele), a Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary for 66 years, died on Sunday, March 5, 2023, at St. Peter's Hospital. That evening the Church in Albany lost a well-known and uniquely gifted leader.

One of the three daughters of Joseph and Mary Ryan Byrne, "Joan Ann" was born on June 18, 1932, in Washington, D.C. A bright and eager learner who loved reading from her earliest childhood, Joan completed high school at the Academy of the Holy Names in Silver Spring, MD, and went to work at the FBI, a common employment path for able young women in the D. C. area. Among the exciting alternatives of post-war Washington, Joan discerned a call to religious life. In January of 1955, she left her two dear sisters and home, following the idealism of the era to attend to God's voice at the Holy Names novitiate in Rome, NY.

For her first ministries, "Sister Jean Adele's" attractive way and delightful sense of humor made her an effective and appreciated teacher, especially of the little ones in parish elementary schools. However, in 1963, Sister Jean Adele was named Director of Postulants and charged with using her studies in theology and interest in the emerging Vatican II visions for revitalized Church and religious life, to guide the initiation of new entrants to the Holy Names congregation. While in that role, "Sister Joan" (the community having reverted to use of one's baptismal name) extended her B.S. in Education, adding, in 1968, a Masters in counseling from Siena College.

By the mid-1970s, with few entering religious life, and the Albany diocese's parish life so full of potential and vitality, Sister Joan accepted a call to use her skill in analysis, research, and administration at the "hub parish" of St. Vincent de Paul. There she worked with the longtime pastor and dear friend, Father Leo O'Brien, and with countless lay and priestly colleagues to manage the properties, systems, and programs according to the changing needs of the thousands of people who claimed St. Vincent's as their spiritual home. Many of those parishioners will be ever grateful for the loving friendship, personal guidance, and spiritual enrichment Sister Joan offered as gifts to the people she served.

Even in her senior years, Sister Joan used her extensive experience and fine mind to further the work of various commissions and committees of the Albany Diocese and of her religious community. These roles benefitted from her life-long engagement with "all things print-based" _ resource documents, data collections, political theses, puzzles, newspapers, and books.

Great as Joan's affection and devotion for family and friends was part of her identity for her very-full 90 years, more than a few have remarked that the largest room in Joan's heavenly mansion must be a magnificent library. May she enjoy every page she opens!

The Sisters of the Holy Names invite family and friends to celebrate Sister Joan's rich, multi-chaptered life of service. We will gather for a wake service and time for remembering at her "professional home", St. Vincent de Paul Church, 900 Madison Ave., Albany, on Friday, March 10, from 4 -6 pm (Prayer at 4:00pm). The liturgical celebration will be at 1:00pm Saturday, March 11, in the church, preceded by an opportunity for prayers of farewell from 11:30am – 12:30pm

Those who wish may honor Joan by donations to the Sisters of the Holy Names, 1121 New Scotland Rd., Albany, NY 12208.