

SISTER ISABELLE JORDEN
June 25, 1920 - November 22, 2007



As I sat in Isabelle's room after her death, on Thanksgiving Day, I looked across at the opposite wall where I saw a Red Hat banner that said, "Live well!" I thought, "What a commentary on Isabelle's life!" Those two words pretty well sum up what she was all about. She loved life and did her best to make sure that everyone else could enjoy life to the fullest. And her whole being was about wellness! I believe that the key to her life is contained in a hymn which she chose for her golden jubilee liturgy. It said: "Lord, you are the center of my life. I will always praise you; I will always serve you; I will always keep you in my sight."

Isabelle, known in religious life as Sister Aloysius, was the youngest of the seven children of Thomas Jorden and Mary Higginbottom. All of her older siblings are now deceased—Violet, Ralph, Thomas, Raymond, Robert, and Clyde. Her nieces and nephew are here with us tonight: Mary Ann, Bob, Sally, and Helen. We also have grand-nieces and nephews and members of the Conte family, the Volkens and many others who knew and loved Isabelle.

In her sister's footsteps, Isabelle attended Seton Hill College and graduated in the class of '42 with her friends, Mildred, Deborah, Leah and dear Davey. She entered in 1943 with those same friends, although Davey had already entered in 1940. With her in her group were also Sisters Miriam Jane, Mary Jude, Christina, Mary Catherine Seli, and Felicita. And she loved them all!

Isabelle headed almost immediately into nursing at Pittsburgh Hospital where she received her diploma. I had an e-mail from one of her patients who said, "I remember her tending to my health care at Pittsburgh Hospital when I broke my finger as a young boy. She was always a reassuring presence."

Her long career in nursing covered the gamut of care for those of all ages. One of her greatest loves was obstetrics and she served as the OB supervisor at both Pittsburgh and Jeannette District Memorial Hospitals. She spent two years at Roselia Foundling and Maternity Hospital and then went on to be the Assistant Dean of Women for a year and then Director of Health Services at Seton Hill for 15 years. During that time she earned her certification as a nurse practitioner at the tender age of 61! After "retiring" from Seton Hill at age 65, she and Davey opened the senior high rise at Gilbert Straub Plaza. This required that Isabelle pass the HUD test to become a manager. Indeed she never stopped learning! She and Davey served there for 13 years, making life full and rich for the residents of the plaza. They then came to Caritas Christi where they continued to be at the center of many lives and activities. Isabelle in her red hat always had a huge smile!

At her very core, Isabelle was happiest when looking out for others, caring for their health, listening to their concerns, throwing a party, or cooking a meal. She was the Pearl Mesta of the convent. She lived life with gusto! She knew how to “Live well” in all the senses of those two words. Practical, professional, unfailingly kind, and good-humored, Isabelle was the “go to” person in any emergency.

She did indeed make God the center of her life and a presence in all the lives she touched each day. She served the Lord as a true Sister of Charity and kept God in her sight. Now God, who always kept her in His sight, has drawn her to her true home. May you rest there, Isabelle, in a joyful reunion with your family and friends and live on in eternal peace.

Funeral Liturgy Reflections
Sister Vivien Linkhauer
November 26, 2007

