



**Sister Francis de Sales Joyce**  
May 23, 1919 - January 26, 2012

How do I describe a woman who could not be easily dismissed? Zacchaeus, of gospel fame, was not easily dismissed. The story is told of him that he wanted to check out this Jesus fellow. But people got in the way. He was short! So he scampered up a sycamore tree for a better view.

Fast forward to September 8, 1938, the day Sister Francis de Sales entered the Seton Hill Sisters of Charity. Here she comes up between the sycamores along Seton Hill Drive to begin her search for this Jesus. She would soon find out that people did more often than not get in the way—especially since she too was short.

When Jesus called out, “Zacchaeus, come down, I wish to eat in your house today.” Zacchaeus came down and immediately protested his renewal of faith. If I have defrauded anyone of his money, I will pay it back four fold, etc. etc. He was a tax collector.

When Francis de Sales enters the kingdom of heaven, she will surely protest her new found faith. Lord, if I have hurt anyone, I shall pray for them, but before she could give the list of names she was caught in the embrace of Jesus—This is true forgiveness.

Now when will all of this happen? I don't know. But this I do know, Francis will get into heaven.

And there she will again see her father, Patrick Joyce and her mother, Cecilia (Flaherty) Joyce. She will see her sisters who went before her: Joan, Patty, Nora, now Francis.

Francis was the oldest of 5 girls, baptized Cecilia Jane Joyce. The last of the siblings, Sue and her husband, Ray Thornton, could not be with us tonight. They live in Kansas and both are 80 years old.

Francis graduated from St. Phillip's grade school in Crafton and St. James High School in the West End of Pittsburgh. She continued her education at Carlow (Mercy) College. Two years into her college life, she entered the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill.

For years she taught primary grades. She then completed her studies, receiving a degree in English, social studies and German from Seton Hill University and she did post graduate work at the University of Pittsburgh, Duquesne University, the University of Pennsylvania and Boston College.

She also served as principal of Saint Thomas Aquinas School in California, PA, and as principal of Cathedral School (Aquinas Academy). From 1967 until 1976, she served as the school supervisor and assistant superintendent of schools in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

In 1976-1978, she was member of the faculty in the department of education at Seton Hill University. She also taught Elementary Education in the Seton Hill summer sessions from 1956-1993. From 1977-1987 she ministered as a diocesan consultant director for elementary education.

At the age of sixty-eight, Francis became coordinator of the office for evangelization in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. After six years she was concerned about driving. She called her Greensburg superiors and asked if there were a job opening in PA. Sister Mary Jo Mutschler asked if she would be interested in writing the Volume II of the Community History. She took a while to answer and then gave a positive answer, yes she would do it-with a few caveats. After six or so computers and as many physical moves, she completed work with the help of many sisters and Susan Isola (her index source).

It was a great day when the book was completed. We now had a Volume II of the History of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. We celebrated with gusto. Each sister in the community received a copy of the book. All was underwritten by the niece and nephew of Sister Electa Boyle. Sister Electa had written Volume I.

While at Caritas Christi, Francis also held a councilor's position, copied the daily prayer list, wrote the memorial prayers for the November Memorial Mass and performed sundry other jobs. All the time she was attentive to her own prayers—indeed a very active lady.

When she was eighty-nine, she wrote the life of Mother Aloysia Lowe and after much ado, it was published. She was considering writing "92", her age, and the house number of her home in Crafton. It never happened. She died very quickly of a stroke.

I've known Francis for about 50 years. Often as we rode in the car, she would be silent for a long time and then she would start to sing our beautiful hymn, "Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom. The answer, Francis, was, "This day, you will be with me in Paradise."

What is a day in eternity?



Mother Aloysia Lowe

*Funeral Liturgy Reflection*  
*~Sister Francis de Sales Joyce, SC*  
*January 26, 2012*