



# Thoughts on the Journey...

Suanne Gettings—Pastoral Associate - November 10, 2019

My high school experience at Immaculate Conception Academy in Oldenburg, Indiana was wonderful. Since it was literally 'home' for us during the week, we had a rather regimented schedule. We got up at the crack of dawn every morning, we went to Mass together, we had three meals a day in the dining room, classes, chores to earn part of our tuition, extra curricular activities and the like. There were rules, regulations, and expectations. The Franciscan Sisters who were in charge of our lives while we boarded there during the week, did a great job of maintaining order and balance in the lives of the adolescent girls who lived with them at the Franciscan Motherhouse. For the most part, they also did a wonderful job of mentoring us and I learned a lot from them by observing the way they lived their faith inside the classroom and the day-to-day way they lived their lives inside the community.

There was, however, this hour and a half block of time every evening when we were subjected to study hall. At 7:00 p.m., we reported to a very large open room on the second floor with beautiful hard wood floors, large windows that looked out on the grounds, neat rows of desks nicely spaced, and a restroom. Everything we needed, for the time we were in study hall was contained in that room. Here comes the part where the organ chord of doom is played and the scene begins to change. There was a large desk at the front of the room that was the perch for our study hall monitor, affectionately known as Sister Bulldog. (for the life of me, I really don't remember her real name). She was one of the retired sisters who had three jobs at the motherhouse: running the snack shop, monitoring the study hall, and all 'round spy and snitch. Every evening she would stand at the doorway as we filed in and look for things to find fault with: *"Your shirt is not tucked in to your uniform skirt properly – how do you expect to study looking like that? Do you have permission to wear those socks? Don't start any monkey business with me tonight young lady, because you'll live to regret it! Did you comb your hair with an egg beater?"* In my years at the academy, I don't ever remember seeing her smile. She barked orders better than any platoon sergeant and could suck the life out of a room like a wet-vac on steroids.

She had a very strange distain for restrooms and unless you were ready to explode, you didn't dare leave your seat and ask to use the toilet. Poised in her Franciscan habit, the garment of her order, she reminded me of a porch goose with no life - just an outfit. Instead of living the joy of her faith, she rather tried to ruin everyone else's joy. Instead of seeing the good in people, she was on a mission to shut down any good news before it started. She clearly wasn't living the Franciscan spirit, nor was she living the spirit of the Gospel. But, we don't know what was at the heart of her anger and unhappiness.

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In Luke's gospel this week, Jesus is presented with a question by the Sadducees related to details of Mosaic law and what happens to married people after they die. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, but instead believed that there was not more beyond this life other than an extension of the present life with similar conditions. The Sadducees also understood this world to be the only world in which God would act as a keeper of covenantal promises. Their question to Jesus was not genuine, but was rather intended to trap Jesus.

Jesus responds by letting them know that the resurrected life is not this life all over again, but rather we can look forward to new life and a share in the divine life for eternity. Jesus said to them,

**"The children of this age marry and remarry; but those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. They can no longer die, for they are like angels; and they are the children of God because they are the ones who will rise."**

What does it mean for us to be resurrection people? It means that we don't have to wait to die to wear the joy of the resurrection. We believe, here and now, in the promise of Jesus, that we will have life eternal.

Regardless of what is happening in this present life, we always have something to look forward to, because we have an ongoing relationship with the living God that will never end. That is cause for joy. On our loneliest day, we are not alone; When we don't have two dimes to rub together, we are rich; When we experience hunger, it is our God who makes us full; When we are broken, we will be healed; When we fail, we are forgiven. When we long to be loved, all we have to do is turn to the God who never stops loving us exactly where we are.

Sister Bulldog could have worn any habit from any community and topped it off with the Pope's miter, but if she wanted people to be convinced of her beliefs, she needed to wear the love of God rooted in the joyful promise of divine eternity.

When we are resurrection people, it does matter what we wear. Wearing the joy of your faith makes us effective witnesses to Jesus' good news. If you're needing a new look these days, try putting on Christ!