



Name: Sister Joanne Plain  
Date of Birth: August 23, 1932  
Place of Birth: Oconto Falls, Wisconsin  
Parents: Frank and Gladys (Cleary) Plain  
Religious Profession: August 15, 1951  
Date of Death: July 16, 2018  
Age: 85  
Years Professed: 66

#### Wake Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Margaret Mary Plain was born on August 23, 1932 to Frank and Gladys (Cleary) Plain in Oconto Falls, Wisconsin. Margaret Mary was baptized at Saint Anthony Church in Oconto Falls on August 28, 1932 and confirmed there on April 18, 1945 by Bishop Bona. All of her siblings were girls. The oldest girls in the family were twins. Jean died when she was 4 months old and Joan died when she was two months old. Margaret Mary was the fourth of nine children. As she wrote in a Jubilee reflection, the name Margaret Mary was never used unless she was in trouble. Her nick name was Momie.

Momie attended St. Anthony School which was staffed by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. She was impressed that a group of Sisters were always on the playground during recess playing baseball and volleyball. Momie and her sisters would help carry the Sisters' things to the Convent in their wagon. Momie found school studies challenging. Since the students were usually in double grades her sisters would report back to her parents. The Sisters and her parents supported her as best that they could. This impressed Momie deeply.

When Momie told her Mom that she wanted to be a Sister, her Mom was reluctant. In a reflection on her vocation story, she wrote:

*My mom was just like so many other moms – she didn't want to see her little girl grow up. When still in eighth grade, I told her that I wanted to go to the Convent with my classmates, she thought I was too young. If she lived in the era of the TV hit, "Who Wants to Be A Millionaire," I would say that she used one of her lifelines. Mom contacted her Reverend Brother who worked in the Southern Missions. He gave the decision that became my "final answer." If I didn't like it, he said, I could always come home.*

Her Pastor, Father Frank Fraucart, wrote the following recommendation for Margaret Mary on June 20, 1946:

*I have known Margaret Mary Plain for nearly eight months. I find that she is a good student and a good character. I can recommend her without reservations. Signed, (Rev.) Frank Fraucart*

Margaret Mary was accepted and entered Holy Family Convent on August 15, 1946. She earned her High School diploma from Holy Family Academy in 1950. On the day of her Reception she received the

name, Sister Joanne. Her patron, St. Joan of Arc, was an inspiration and an encouragement for her. She was an example of someone who did not give up when a situation got hard.

Sister Joanne earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Holy Family College on May 21, 1967 with a major in History and a minor in English. Sister Joanne grew to love teaching. She had great understanding and patience for students who found learning difficult. She had a favorite Scripture text from Jeremiah 18:6 which reads, "Like the clay in the hand of the potter, so you are mine." Sister Joanne reflected:

*"Working with children has brought much joy to my life. During those years, I was clay in the Potter's hands. He has done much chiseling throughout those years and this chiseling was painful. I had many rough corners to file down, but in the end it has paid off.*

*After what to me felt like an awful lot of refining, I was asked to teach in Peru. When I went to bid farewell to Mother Edna, she didn't seem too sure of the Potter's product. She knew of my challenge with studies and was concerned for me because it meant learning a new language. I also knew the inspiration of St. Joan of Arc who did not give up.*

*In Peru, for thirty years I entered into the lives and faith of the people. It was a learning process as well as a teaching process. I am still utterly amazed at what I learned from those faith-filled people. Then the Potter again began to chisel. I was asked to give up what I had grown to love and return to the States. The clay continues to be remolded and chiseled.*

Sister Joanne taught in Wisconsin and in California 15 years before going to Peru. When she left Peru she went to St. Francis Convent for a semester before going to teach in West Point, Nebraska and in Yuma, Arizona. In 2004 Sister Joanne returned to Holy Family Convent to help with various tasks and participate in the Prayer Apostolate, praying for the people and Sisters in Yuma. When her health began to fail, she went to St. Rita Health Center in 2008, where she resided until Monday afternoon, July 16<sup>th</sup>.

*I continue with Sister Joanne's vocation reflection: During all my years, the Lord really helped me. My prayer time is a very special time for me. It means to lose myself and live for Him; to take time to realize how important prayer life is – not just in church, but in daily life. It is more than using a prayer book or going to Mass. For me, it is time to connect with the Lord. No prayer book is necessary. My greatest blessing is that it was always a loving Potter at work, and I thank Him for making of me a piece of pottery worthy of this vocation.*

Sister Joanne did live out her yearly mission assignment by lovingly accepting her sufferings and limitations in order to participate in Christ's work of redemption. She gave herself up completely and handed herself over totally to Our Lord. Thank you, Sister Joanne, for your commitment and the inspiration of your life as a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity.

May you rest in peace.