

**Remembering Sister Luanne Yocke, IHM  
April 1, 1919 - May 29, 2009**



"...for all of us it is our present situation and the given circumstances of our lives that provide our own road to holiness." So writes Robert Ellsberg in his book, *The Saint's Guide to Happiness*. I would like to give you a cursory view of the situations and circumstances in Luanne Yocke's life that were her road to holiness.

The first situation, of course, was her birth into a loving family on April 1, 1919. Loyola Agnes was welcomed by her parents, Gustave and Mary Haid Yocke, and her siblings Edna, Edwin who became Father Yocke, Adelaide and Catherine. Floyd and Raymond followed Luanne in the family lineup. All of Luanne's siblings preceded her in death.

St. Vincent School in Akron, Ohio, was the second situation in which Luanne found herself. She was, as you would expect, a good student and very involved in activities. She had quite an active social life so her decision to make the third situation her entrance into the IHM community in Monroe in 1936 was a surprise to some of her friends and a big step for her.

As we all know, there are many adjustments involved in a decision as important as making a life commitment. Leaving her family and friends was not easy. The 'given circumstances' in her early years of formation as an IHM Sister helped her in future years as she assumed different educational positions as teacher, principal and high school counselor in schools in Michigan and Ohio. Each assignment challenged Luanne in many ways and she seemed to come through with a stronger faith than before. Luanne was well loved by her students and faculties. Her ministry was in the field of education for 37 years.

After leaving the educational field, Luanne served in community administration, as a minister of Christian service in her parish, and was a Hospice volunteer. Several years ago she retired and, in time, made the move to the Motherhouse.

Losses of family and close friends were a big part of Luanne's life along her road to holiness. The sudden death of her beloved brother Father Ed was extremely difficult. She suffered with the loss of her parents and her other siblings but especially her sister Catherine who struggled for years with failing eyesight. Luanne was very close to Catherine, who was just three years older, and she visited her as often as she could.

The deaths of some of Luanne's co-workers who were also very close friends were curves or challenges on her road to holiness. Sr. Rosalie Omans, who was Provincial of the Northeast Province, was a painful loss. Luanne was serving as Sr. Rosalie's Secretary and they worked well together. Sr. Rosalie's brief illness gave little time to prepare oneself for her death. Luanne then succeeded Rosalie as Provincial.

Sister Rita Bryden's sudden death a few years later was also a shock for Luanne. Rita and Luanne had been missioned together at St. Gregory's for several years in their early religious life. They were two-of-a-kind – always ready for a laugh, a party or even something serious - and became very close friends.

Sister Jackie Cullen's death was the last big loss for Luanne. Jackie had been Luanne's assistant principal during the years they were missioned at St. Mary's in Akron. They became very good friends and spent many a vacation together in later years. Jackie's illness was longer than Sister Rosalie's but her death in 2003 was just as difficult for Luanne to accept.

Luanne was anything but "all work and no play" as her friends will testify. Throughout her life, Luanne was an avid reader and always shared her books with her many friends.

Any memorial tribute to Luanne would be incomplete without mention of her unfailing devotion to her home state of Ohio. She cheered on the Ohio State team at the annual gathering we had for the U of M/Ohio State game. Her pride and joy was the piece of sod from the Ohio State stadium which she had framed. She brought it to every gathering and placed it in a prominent position.

A number of years ago each IHM Sister was asked to complete a page which we called "The Book of Life Page." Luanne's page includes the following quote:

"The Holy Spirit has been the Divine Architect of my life – I have been only a co-worker in the building process. I know that I am not the designer or developer of my destiny. I have always trusted the Spirit to ensure that all the pieces of my life story fit together in one beautiful design. There have been times when I tried to do things my own way but my architect was always present, constantly assessing the building in progress. She would note any flaw and see that any necessary change was made. Ever creative, my architect always works with me as I am, with all my particular human gifts and foibles, calling forth my deepest potential. I have always had trust and confidence in her calling, leading and guiding. I do not know what the future holds but I know who holds the future."

And now, Luanne does know what the future holds – the fullness of life in her God's presence. She is reunited with all of her loved ones and together they rejoice with her as she has finally completed the trip on her own road to holiness. And we, her friends still following our road to holiness, rejoice with and for her.

Written by Mary Ann Untener, IHM  
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