



Sister Joan Christine Tobin Professed 1967

“When you acknowledge the integrity of your solitude and settle into its mystery, your relationships with others take on new warmth, adventure, and wonder.” John O’Donohue

Sr. Joan Tobin (formerly Sr. Joseph Christi), 85, died in Assisi House on December 27. She was born in Philadelphia but later moved to New Jersey and was already actively involved in healthcare prior to her entrance into the congregation in 1964. Joan’s years in ministry took her to the Dioceses of Philadelphia, Allentown, Baltimore, and Wilmington. In each she shared her gifts in healthcare—as nurse, instructor, family counselor, and chaplain. In summarizing her ministry in healthcare, Joan described her work as “twice blessed because it was in the Lord’s service. That was special to me!”



Sr. Margaret Lewis shared a remembrance of Joan that reflected a depth of understanding of the medical profession that far surpassed what came from a textbook. At the time Joan was an instructor at St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing in Trenton and had not yet entered the congregation. As she was observing student nurses carrying out their routine tasks, Joan turned to Margaret and said, “Nursing is a profession close to the heart of Christ.” And then, referring to the students in their care of patients, she added, “They must reflect compassion for who they are—and not just the text book.”

Sister Patricia Warman described Joan’s overall skill in nursing—and particularly in pediatrics. That skill remained part of her. Pat recalled an incident when Joan lived at the convent in Langhorne. A visitor brought a young baby who was having difficulty taking milk from a bottle. With Joan’s magic touch, the baby was able to consume the entire bottle—much to the amazement and delight of the mother.

As a chaplain Joan was especially dedicated to those who were dying and to their families. She was similarly sensitive to our sisters who were dealing with illness or the death of a loved one. Our sisters who lived with Joan recalled her being a good listener—someone who was fun to be with! Our recently deceased Sr. Ann Joseph Hartman was a special friend. They shared a love of nursing but could talk about anything, particularly spiritual topics. Joan also enjoyed keeping up-to-date with her family. Even though a significant distance separated them, their contacts by mail and family get-togethers was important to all of them.

Joan described herself as “quiet by nature” but readily admitted that she “always enjoyed a good time.” She acknowledged, however, that there were times when she both needed and welcomed silence and quiet space. Like most introverts, Joan was more comfortable with “one-on-one” get-togethers or small rather than large groups. She enjoyed reading, swimming, classical music, and opera—and was also a great sports fan. Spending time at the beach provided a special source of enjoyment for Joan. “I love the shore...the ocean,” she once wrote. “It’s where I found God...myself...there was my ‘liturgy.’”

Joan, you are now enjoying the epitome of the wonder and adventure of God’s “world.” May the warmth of God’s love enfold you as you enjoy the rich rewards of the love and caring you shared with those whom you served during your lifetime on Earth!

*Prayer Service, Assisi House, 9:30 A.M., Friday, January 3, 2020
followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M. Burial in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.*

