



# Honoring Sr. Joan & the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood

**Mass & Reception  
Saturday Sep 24, 2022 at Holy Cross Church**

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**26th Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Saturday Sep 24, 2022**

**Presider Fr. Pat**

**Gathering Hymn: Here I Am, Lord**

**Amos 6:1a, 4-7**

*Their wanton revelry shall be done away with.*

**Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10**

*Praise the Lord, my soul!*

**Timothy 6:11-16**

*Keep the commandment until the appearance  
of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Luke 16:19-31**

*You received what was good, Lazarus what was bad;  
now he is comforted, whereas you are tormented.*

**Offertory Hymn: Fill My Cup, Lord**

**Communion Hymn: The Supper of the Lord**

**Sending Forth Hymn: Go Make a Difference**

Fill My Cup, Lord  
by Richard Blanchard

Like the woman at the well I was seeking  
for things that could not satisfy;  
and then I heard my Savior speaking:  
“Draw from my well that never shall run dry.”

*Refrain:*

Fill my cup Lord, I lift it up Lord!  
Come and quench this thirsting of my soul;  
Bread of heaven, feed me 'til I want no more,  
Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!

There are millions in this world who are craving  
the pleasure earthly things afford;  
but none can match the wondrous treasure  
that I find in Jesus Christ my Lord.

*Refrain*

So, my neighbor, if the things this world gave you  
leave hungers that wouldn't pass away,  
my blessed Lord will come and save you,  
if you knee to him and humbly pray:

*Refrain*

# **A Few Words From Sr. Joan**

## **A Memory in Alaska**

One of my many happy memories is the road trip Sr. Loretta and I took in 2002. We drove the Alcan Hwy. in a minivan, (loaned to us by a SEAS parishioner), from Anchorage to St. Louis and back home to Anchorage. Holy Cross parishioners gifted our trip, with other contributions from SEAS and our Most Precious Blood Community Sisters.

It was a trip to remember and will always be part of the happy memories of our Alaskan family. It is too long a story, but it included a stop at Fr. Ernie's grave in Minnesota. My mother went home to God on Fr. Ernie's birthday, while we were driving through South Dakota.

On the trip we had two incidents with the van. While in Canada, we needed a new gas tank and it just so happened, we were in the only Canadian town in the area that had a plant for that make of vehicle. In Missouri we also had van problems and were within a mile of an auto shop.

This road trip took place between assignment changes for Sr. Loretta and myself: Sr. Loretta was moving from her position at SEAS to Holy Cross Parish and I moved from Holy Cross to the Archdiocesan Tribunal. This coming change made the 55-day journey even more enjoyable. The two of us were celebrating 53 years of friendship and 50 years from our entry into our community of the Most Precious Blood.

Now that I am retiring, I might write a book with pictures as I took very, very many pictures. Places, clouds, haystacks, people, & so forth...different in all places. Many Happy memories.

## **Retiring Again-new expectations**

This is not the first time I have "retired." Every stage of life has a retirement followed by a new beginning -a new Chapter in Our Book of Life. Sr. Loretta and I retired from the field of education as teachers/principals to Parish Service. Sr. Loretta retired Home to Heaven 5 years ago. I am retiring to our Motherhouse to live until I retire to Heaven.

This retirement with my community Sisters and close by family will be, what I hope will be, a life as a Radiant Elder being hopeful and a Hope provider for others. Wherever we are, whomever we are, whatever we retire from, we can all be Radiant Elders, not just "old" persons. If you want to follow up on that concept there is an article by Sister Lynn M. Levo, CSJ, titled "Engaging Ag-

ing,” Spring 2021 on the National Religious Retirement Office website that speaks to all of us who have reached Elderhood. I retired from 3rd Age Elderhood (60-80) some time ago. I am in 4th Age Elderhood (80+). I would be happy to make a copy for anyone who does not have access to the Internet.

## What will I Miss

I will miss being physically present to my Alaskan Family of 32 years. However, I will quote my Dad and Mom from the Holy Card they gave me on August 24, 1952 (70 years ago), which was the day Sr. Loretta and I entered the Convent. What they said fits perfectly for this situation: “With you at all times wherever we may be.” It works both ways.

-Sr. Joan



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## A History of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood in Alaska

Today is a day of celebration for Sr. Joan Oberle as she continues her consecrated faith journey from Anchorage to her community of Sisters of the Most Precious Blood in O’Fallon, Missouri. We also want to remember and celebrate the late Sr. Loretta Luecke and all the Most Precious Sisters who have contributed their life’s vocation to our Alaskan community.

There are no words which can truly express our gratitude for the selfless love and commitment of all the Most Precious Blood Sisters. These women of faith have been an example of the love of Jesus through their humility, guidance, and tireless work.

Despite the deaths of Fr. Ernie Muellerleile and Sr. Loretta Luecke, Tribunal ups and downs, and even under the impact of a pandemic, Sr. Joan marched on with positivity, perseverance, gentleness, and most importantly, faithfulness.

Sr Joan and Sr Loretta met while attending a Precious Blood high school in St. Louis, where Sr. Loretta was a boarder and Sr. Joan a day student. Together, they professed first vows in 1955 at the Precious Blood mother house in

O'Fallon, Mo. Sr. Joan said she was drawn as a youth to the Precious Blood's devotion to the Divine Office and their use of Gregorian chant. Sr. Loretta said, "perhaps the biggest draw of the community was the Sister's habit," she "liked how they looked and how they taught."



Both women spent most of their early careers in teaching and school administration assignments in the Midwest, and although their posts took them to separate locations, they maintained a close friendship. Sr.

Joan's assignments included a school facing "inner city poverty," and one in the wealthiest parish in a large city. She said both assignments were "beneficial and enriching," although in the inner city she "learned bad language she never knew existed."

In 1983, Precious Blood Sisters Sr. Marie Orr and Sr. Bernita Poepsel arrived in Anchorage to work at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. They left before 1990.

Sr. Barbara Jeane came after 1983 to work in the Chancery's Hispanic office, she too left prior to Sr Joan and Sr Loretta's arrival to Anchorage.

Sr. John Bosco also served in our parish for two summers after we moved into our present church building, to set up our library.

In 1990, there was an opening for a Sister in Alaska. At this time there were no longer any Sisters from their Community in Anchorage. Neither Sister wanted to come up alone. With the help of Fr. Ernie, who had known the Sisters since the novitiate, and Fr. Stan Allie, Pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, they made it happen.

The Sister Joan and Sr. Loretta arrived in Anchorage in 1990. Sr. Joan spent her first 12 years in Anchorage as Pastoral Associate at Holy Cross with the late Fr. Ernest Muellerleile. Sr. Loretta was assigned to St Elizabeth Ann Seton where she worked as Pastoral Associate when Fr. Dan Hebert was pastor. The

Sisters and two Priests got on so well they even traveled to Ireland and England together to mark Fr Ernie's 50th anniversary of Priesthood. Fr. Dan once said the Sisters "are joyful in their vocation" and "they are more than working companions for me, they're true friends."



Sr. Joan has always remained a working “member” of Holy Cross even after she was reassigned in 2002 to the Archdiocesan Marriage Tribunal Office. Sr. Loretta was then assigned to Holy Cross as the Parish Administrator until her passing in 2017.

The Sisters were not only administrators but also involved in all aspects of parish life and ministry at one time or another. A few of these responsibilities included all sacramental preparations, RCIA, adult and children’s Faith Formation, Vacation Bible School, the Newsletter, Outreach Program, Vocations, Prayer chain, kitchen duty, and pastoral counseling. One older parishioner said the Marriage prep from the Sisters, after the Annulment process, was the best marriage counseling he and his wife had ever had.

These two Sisters of the Most Precious Blood helped build our Holy Cross Parish up from a storefront church to the thriving Catholic faith Community we are today.

Some little-known facts about Sr. Joan:

- She and Sr. Loretta provided Communion Services (and Faith formation) for Girdwood and Whittier in the years the Seward Highway was a dark 2 lane road. Sr. Joan says they kept water, food, and sleeping bags in the car “just in case.” The sisters prayed they would not miss the train in either direction!
- Sr. Joan has remained on the Parish Finance Committee since her arrival to Anchorage; she explains the past parish history to inform the present to prepare for the future.
- Sr. Joan has a love of Twinkies, cheesecake, all things pigs, and her red purse and scarf. She now will only use a cane that makes a “fashion statement!”



One parishioner of Holy Cross who has known the Sisters since their arrival stated, “they both have been significant blessings in my life.” She also explained “it will be a significant change to not have Sr. Joan in our day to day lives. I will certainly miss her a great deal, but I am very happy she can be with her family and community of Sisters. It is even more important now that they can be together.”



# Holy Cross Thanks You, Sister Joan!

