

Sister Jean William Diepenbrock, C.PP.S.

Born: February 14, 1943

Professed: August 10, 1964

Entered into Life: September 14, 2015

Verse on her memorial card: **“All God has accomplished is wonderful.”** Isaiah 25:1



Dear Sisters,

On September 14, 2015, Sister Jean William Diepenbrock entered eternal life to celebrate with Jesus and all the saints the feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross. The cross of suffering she bore for many years now gives way to experiencing an “eternal mansion, the delights of which exceeds all we can conceive, death is not the final word.” (Quote from St. Basil the Great, Sept. 14)

Sr. Jean William donated her body to science and through that gift to medicine, she will be helping future generations of persons deal with chronic pain.

Born Sandra Elaine on February 14, 1943, Sr. Jean William was the second child of the late Blanche and William Diepenbrock. She will be missed by her brother, Bill, his wife, Marcella, their children and grandchildren, her friends and sisters in the Precious Blood Community and in the O’Fallon business community.

Baptized at St. Thomas of Aquin Parish in St. Louis, Sr. Jean William entered the community from Mary Queen of the Universe Parish in 1961. She graduated from the University of Missouri, Columbia, as an Industrial Engineer and was one of only two women in the engineering classes in the 1960’s. This was quite an accomplishment in those years for women and women religious.

Sr. Jean William began ministry as an elementary teacher in Our Lady of Fatima School in Florissant and All Saints School in St. Peters, both in Missouri, and St. Peter’s School in Quincy, Illinois. In 1969, she began her ministry as an engineer at the Motherhouse in O’Fallon. At first, Sr. Jean William was a maintenance assistant learning about buildings, systems, boilers, etc. She worked with the plant engineer, Richard Hilpert, who taught her many things about keeping systems running, anticipating breakdowns and efficient management practices. Being a practical person, Sr. Jean William was ready for the challenges of this ministry.

For twenty-two years, Sr. Jean William ministered in O’Fallon and had many titles: Plant Manager, Fleet Coordinator (cars), Engineer, and Staff Supervisor. She was also responsible for our school, Linda Vista, in Chesterfield, Missouri. One Halloween night, Sisters Jean William, Michaleen and Mary Beth wanted to discourage possible vandalism to the school buildings and property. So they climbed to the roof of the school with jackets, blankets and flashlights. When cars would pull into the property they would shine their lights and scare them away. Sr. Jean William had a quiet sense of humor and a great laugh.

As one of the first members of the O'Fallon Business Association (OBA), Sr. Jean William was an ambassador of good will and an excellent representative of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood. In 2007, she received the Citizen of the Year Award from the OBA and said: *"I represent St. Mary's Institute in the O'Fallon Business Association and serve as treasurer, with yardstick in hand, to govern the disposition of treasury funds and assure accuracy in our accounting system. It is a pleasure to serve with such a distinguished and community-oriented group of business owners."*

Sr. Jean William was a member of the Citizens' Planning Board for the Fire Department and also volunteered with Catholic Charities in St. Peters. In 2003, she was recognized by Catholic Charities for *"opening new doors to funding sources, to teaching the staff to use the new phone system. Her quiet enthusiasm, keen sense of humor, attention to detail, and unique experience as a professional engineer added to her ability to relate and assist families and individuals."*

Francis Hermann, an employee and engineer, worked alongside Sr. Jean William for many years. Francis was always impressed that Sister could anticipate the breakdown of systems or machines before it happened. "She was practical and would watch Richard repair doors, install locks and learned by watching him do the myriad of jobs around the Motherhouse. I also remember Sr. Jean William's brother Bill tell me that she would follow her Dad around the house as he did repairs and learned from him."

Since 1995, Sr. Jean William lived in Villa Theresa Haven with a ministry of prayer and presence. Even when experiencing chronic pain she would thank the nurses and aides for answering her needs and would apologize for being crabby. She was protective of the staff, loyal to all of them and became part of their lives. Sr. Jean William would ask about their families "what's new with you" and was genuinely interested in them. During her final days she would thank anyone who visited, spoke to her, or shared chocolate. The nurses and aides knew it was her favorite and would bring "kisses" for her even in her last days because that was the one thing she could enjoy eating.

We will have a Prayer Service and sharing of memories for Sr. Jean William on Friday, October 23, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. in St. Joseph Chapel. Her Memorial Mass will be on Saturday, October 24, 2015, at 4:00 p.m.

Clearly, the quote from Isaiah on Sr. Jean William's prayer card has come true: ***"All God has accomplished is wonderful."*** Isaiah 25:1. We know that Sandra Elaine, Sr. Jean William, is in God's hands and experiencing freedom, release from pain and pure joy. We rejoice with her and ask Sister to pray for us, to help us to be "engineers of joy, love, compassion and mercy."

Sincerely,



Sr. Fran