

# *In Memory of Sr. Francis Ignatius Olguin*

~ written by Br. Gregory Lucrezia, SA ~



“My dear Sisters, Friars, relatives and friends of **Sr. Francis Ignatius**: Please accept my sincere expression of sympathy ....

“When I was informed that Sr. Francis Ignatius was close to meeting her Maker, my mind wandered back to 1981 when I was ministering at St. Christopher’s Inn .... At that time the Medical Department consisted of me (full-time), Sr. Margaret Connolly, Barbara Skidmore & Cathy Curtin (part-time nurses). Fr. Carmen had visited me the night before our General Chapter ... of that year, and stated that he was concerned that I was putting in too many hours. I said “Well if you get elected as General, you could do something about it.” Well he did get elected, and within one week he did something about it. He ... told me that one of the Atonement Sisters, an RN, was interested in ministering at the Inn. He told me that she would be coming to see me and when she came her first question was, “**When do I start?**”

“... Sr. Francis worked with me until I left the Inn in ‘93. We worked over 12 years together and remained friends until the day the good Lord took her. There were many Sisters who worked at the Inn during my time .... But in 1981, Sr. Francis was the first Sister working full-time .... Sister was a good religious and a good nurse and she gave example in both fields. Oh yes, she could be tough, but working with residents with alcohol problems called for tough love, **AND SHE GAVE IT TO THEM!** But she also took care of them.... She had been an RN for years and now she was working at the Inn with me, an LPN, as her “boss.” It did not matter to her one bit, because, as she said, ‘... we are taking care of the Brothers Christopher, (Christ Bearers) and that is what is important....’

“Sr. Francis was a very important part of our staff and was very concerned not only about the men, but also about the Friars, the staff and their families.... When my sister, Laura Jeanne, died at the age of 46 in 1994, the weather was very bad. The day of the funeral, many could not make the drive from Graymoor. Sr. Francis made it.... she said, ‘If I could not make it by car, there’s always the train.’

“Sr. Francis left her mark on the Inn. Things have changed since she, Br. Joe O’Gara, Tom Shalley and I left the Inn. Men who come back will tell stories ... about the people that were there; and one that will be talked about the most will be the short little Sister with “tough love” and kind heart... Picture in your mind: Sr. Francis has entered heaven ... and she looks around ... and she says to the good Lord, “**When do I start?**”

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*An excerpt from the “Homily of the funeral Mass” for Sr. Francis Ignatius – by Fr. Bill Drobach, SA*

February 23, 2012

Well, what can I say about our beloved **Sr. Francis Ignatius**? To know her was to love her or be petrified of her. A little woman, small in stature but strong in spirit and had a tough love swing! ...

In learning more about her from Sisters, Friars and staff at SCI, and also seeing her picture in uniform last night, I get an image of Francis Ignatius as “Rosie the Riveter.” She had shared with Paul Manzo, the chef at the Inn, that she attached the cockpits to the planes while in the service .... Can you get a picture of her, like the famous WWII poster of Rosie, with her head wrapped in a scarf, wearing goggles and pounding away at that plane? I can! She was a dynamo.

She was born and raised in Albuquerque, NM and went to Sienna College in NY and received her RN degree in nursing in 1947. I wonder if the seed of her Franciscan calling to the Atonement Sisters was planted there during her studies. After graduating she worked in St. Joseph’s Hospital in Memphis TN. She ministered to the people of God for 54 years as a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement in N.Y., N.J. and Canada.

During her tenure at SCI, Francis Ignatius drove a huge blue Pontiac. So many men thought they were either hallucinating or had the DT’s, seeing that car go up and down the mountain with no driver. She was so tiny behind the wheel you couldn’t see the top of her veil.

Francis Ignatius was a stickler for the rules of SCI, but had a huge compassionate heart. Many of the men would run when they saw her coming. To this day if you mention her name to one of the alumnus of the Inn, you can notice a slight twitch! But her heart was really huge when it came to giving an ear to the men. She was not only an excellent diagnostic nurse but also a counselor to the men. It was nothing for her to spend quality time with a Brother Christopher and help him work through his problem.

Francis Ignatius...you kept us on our toes during your years of ministry and we love you for that!  
Tu corrio una Buena carrera Francis Ignatius,  
ahora puede tu alegria en ver a Dios cara a cara.  
Puenden su alma y las almas de todo el resto  
salido fiel en paz. Amen

