

In Memory of Sr. Julia Coyle



Julia Lourdes Coyle

Born: July 19, 1926

Died at Graymoor: September 22, 2013

Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement

Entered: August 14, 1951

Professed: May 16, 1953

Final Vows: August 30, 1958

Superior General: 1972 - 1976

Re-elected Superior General: 1976 - 1981

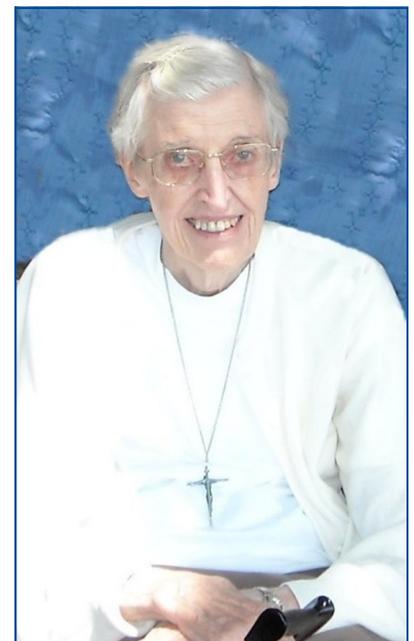
Sr. Julia was born to Timothy and Katherine Agnes (Buckley) Coyle in Utica, New York. Julia had three sisters: Mary Coyle, Elizabeth Coyle, and Anne Therese Coyle.

Mission Assignments:

- Deal, NY
- OLA Novitiate
- Boston, MA
- Rome, Italy
- Graymoor
- Mother Lurana House
- Superior General (1972-76)
- Re-elected Superior General (1976-81)
- Edmonton, AB, CA
- Utica, NY
- Motherhouse



June 2012 - Outing to Moo Moo's Ice Cream Parlor



In Memory of Sr. Julia Coyle

July 19, 1926 ~ September 22, 2013

~ Excerpts from the Homily of Fr. Jim Gardiner given at Sr. Julia's Funeral Mass ~

Funeral Mass: September 25, 2013—in the Motherhouse Chapel



None of the three readings we just heard are totally unfamiliar to us; we're just not used to hearing them proclaimed at funerals: John 17 (the Gospel) is practically drilled into us from the first moment that we enter the Society of the Atonement because, in a phrase, it's our *raison d'être*, our reason for being, what we're supposed to be about wherever we are and as long as we are.

I Corinthians 11 is one of the earliest fragments of the Christian tradition that's preserved anywhere in the New Testament. We hear it read every Holy Thursday; it pre-dates the so-called "institutional accounts" and it's the scriptural warrant for all of our "real presence" arguments as well as a reminder that the unity for which Christ himself prayed will be attained when "full communion" around the Lord's table and elsewhere will be the norm.

Then there's Habakkuk, admittedly a minor prophet who nonetheless had an important message for his own times and subsequent generations; not as well-known as his counterparts – he only makes an appearance in the Lectionary every three years. He, nonetheless, offers a cogent reminder not to tamper with the vision, (i.e. to know who you are – individually and communally), and, as a result, what you have to be about.

Julia, by the way, didn't select these readings. I think Sister Death may have crept upon her a bit unexpectedly. Sr. Susan Boyle, I was told, selected them and if there's anyone in the congregation who'd know what Julia would want, it would be Susan - who spent several years closely working with her.

Even though they were more or less "randomly" selected – and I use that word "randomly" advisedly – there is a thread that works its way through them. It's vision and mission, two sides, I'm beginning to think, of the same coin. Paul was careful to point out that what he handed on was, in fact, what had been entrusted to him. Habakkuk insisted on capturing the vision and writing it down to preserve it intact. Jesus seemed to foresee not only fragmentation among his followers, but also the necessity of ongoing, sustained and focused prayer as the only way in which what's lacking in the body of Christ might be completed. Julia Coyle, I think it's safe to say, bought into all of that as a promising young woman.

It's no secret that Julia was smart, *very* smart. She was always thinking; and as one sister said to me many year ago, "you may not always know *what* she's thinking; rest assured, however, *that* she's thinking"

She also had a very sophisticated sense of humor and it took me a while to catch on to it; it took a couple of trips overseas – Italy & Ireland, to be exact – to become aware of it; and to describe as *wry* and *droll* would not do her justice. It was beyond *wry* and *droll*!

She was no stranger to discomfort, but she somehow was able to use that physical discomfort – and shyness – not to *her* own advantage, but to the advantage of the Society and the church.

So we bid farewell to Julia Coyle this morning, grateful for the gifts which she had been given and which she shared, comforting ourselves with the assurance that a good life well lived is the key to life everlasting, and reminding ourselves of the vision which swept our founders off their feet, attracted Julia Coyle & bids us all, while we still have time, to make it plain because, even if it delays, it will not disappoint. **May she rest in peace.**