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In Memoriam

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In Memoriam

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

The Office of Campus Ministry continues to mourn the loss of Fr. Joe Lanzalaco, who passed away a little more than three months ago. We have each written an open letter to share what Fr. Joe meant to us.

In Memoriam



In Memory of Fr. Joe
A Wegmans Gift Card
Has been given to the Campus Ministry
For its Outreach work
By the Rev. Michael Costanzo
(Department of Religious Studies)



*St. John Fisher College Campus Ministry Staff
2014-2015*

The **Office of Campus Ministry** continues to mourn the loss of Fr. Joe Lanzalaco, who passed away a little more than three months ago. We have each written an open letter to share what Fr. Joe meant to us.

Dear Fr. Joe:

When we first met in 2001, I felt an instant connection as we talked about similar taste in movies, books and music; that you were in the military and I was a military wife and we had both lived abroad in the days of the Vietnam war; your family and my family's Italian heritage and traditions – we always had a lot to talk about. We worked well together as I helped you to adjust to office procedures and you allowed me to work independently while you made your presence known on campus; you were always available to meet with anyone who needed advice or counseling or a shoulder to cry on.

You became a great friend to me and to my family – marrying my children, baptizing my grandchildren, renewing my marriage vows, renewing my parents' marriage vows and family funerals. There were numerous other family occasions that you took time to attend without question, which meant the world to me that you were there and offered your support.

I have to admit that since you've been gone, I now realize how much I needed and miss your support in the office. It is definitely NOT the same without you. We used to talk about the future and retirement and what our lives might look like when that happened and even though we would not see each other every day, I knew we would stay connected. I am trying on a daily basis to rise above the sadness and live out some of the defining values and ideals that I learned and am still learning from you. I miss you each and every day!

Love, Sister Julie

Dear Father Joe:

I keep waiting for you to arrive at work each day when the unbelievable reality hits me again that you are gone. I miss you greatly (I can hear your mumbling that you told me so), and I need your advice on a couple of things (I promise it won't take longer than 5 mins.). We all miss you in the office—your quick wit and humor, your rationalism, your sarcasm, our conversations, but most of all, we miss your leadership and support that you always showed our campus ministry team.

The Fisher Family misses you—everyone has a memory or an event or a comment that reminds them of you—and we are grateful for that!

The Vaughan family misses you. You became part of our family over the past 15 yrs., presiding at our baptisms, our weddings (I know you walked more that NYC weekend than you walked in a full year!), and at our funerals. You knew us and you had that special personal and spiritual touch that is irreplaceable.

We are all blessed by your former presence and your “present” presence, so until we meet again, I will pray for you and please pray for us.

Sincerely and With Love,

Sister Sally

Dear Father Joe:

What do I miss most about you? It's a question we, as a department, have been asked often during the course of the fall semester. Is it the stories, the faith, or your presence in the office? Yes, I do miss all of those qualities. Your good mornings, childhood/Vietnam/prison Chaplain stories, and the faith that you brought to the job and the Fisher community are all truly and deeply missed. However, I miss the way you could connect with anyone and everyone. Whether you were a high school student, a prisoner, a veteran, a college student, faculty/staff/administrator, or a member the parish, you could connect with them. Anyone who met you, loved you, and you loved most people right back. I miss how you could talk to and with anyone about anything; sports, movies, books, games, TV, politics, or religion; no topic was off the table. In fact, you loved a good debate or a topic of controversy. If I had to take away one lesson from our seven years together, it would be the value of connection. In higher education it is important to connect with a variety of people. We all come from different cities, towns, and high schools. We all major in different areas, get involved in different activities or work in different departments, and have different off-campus interests. Since we are all different, connecting to each other is important for the success of the college and the college student, and you knew the bridge to do just that. I only hope to carry that lesson forward into my professional career. Our community is better for having you and your ability to connect everyone; I only wish the same for our community going forward. Thank you for an amazing first seven years to my professional career. I will always cherish our lunches, road trips (even though I thought we were never making it home), and all of our conversations. Thank you for all the memories and giving me the chance to start my career in higher education.

Tyler

+Joe,

For at least a week after you left us, I could not understand why people kept asking if I was OK. From the moment I received news of your passing – I was out of state with two students – I went into “ministry mode” – caring for those around me, trying to help them cope with the tremendous shock of losing you. It never really dawned on me that I wasn't okay. I am not okay. I haven't been the same since 6:52 AM on Friday, July 24th. Every day I am reminded in small and not-so-small ways you are no longer here...and it pains my heart. Being with you, or at least talking to you, for pretty much every day of the last thirteen plus years had left its mark of comfort and goodness and wisdom and love... and that was now changed...but not ended. For while your physical presence is gone, your spiritual presence can never be for so great is our God. I am thankful to have had you as such an important part of my life and the lives of my family but I am equally grateful to now have you as a heavenly advocate looking over me and Kim and Kristina until the day we are together again. You will never be forgotten and will always be loved.

+Tom