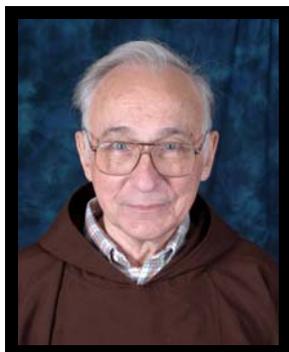


Neerology

Jogues Constance
1927 - 2009



Jogues came into this world as Clarence Edwards Constance on 20 November 1927 in Marquette MI and was baptized into the faith seven days later. It was a faith he would live, cherish, and to which he would adhere to his death. He was born the third of what would eventually be four sons to Harry Constance and Dena Dupras four years after their marriage in 1923.

Harry, a disabled World War I veteran in chronically poor health, was unable to work but helped support his family with his Veteran's Disability income. Dena contributed to the financial needs of raising four sons by cleaning other people's homes and making her sons' clothes. Both were "...simple, devout and faithful Catholics" according to Jogues. The family home was kept neat and clean, and there was always sufficient food to eat.

A fairly typical Midwestern boyhood helped form Jogues into the man he would become. He had a paper route, enjoyed being a Boy Scout, stamp collecting, and playing sports with his friends. As a child he knew he wanted to be a priest and would later say that there never was a time when he wanted to be anything else. Although his father and mother never encouraged or discouraged a priestly vocation, young Clarence had an Aunt Lil on his father's side of the family who unceasingly encouraged Clarence to pursue a priestly vocation. Jogues credited her support and prayers as being partially responsible for the fruition of his vocation.

The highlight of young Clarence's elementary school years was when he became an altar boy around the 5th and 6th grades, fulfilling what he described as "...a great desire...[and]...a sacred and happy honor." Clarence often served at the early morning Masses at the Cathedral in Marquette, and for a number of bishops in his time as an altar boy. He considered serving for the bishops a great honor at the time and later in life.

In his first year of high school in Marquette, Emil Beyer at the cathedral took an interest in Clarence and tutored him with private Latin lessons. Clarence confided in Beyer his desire to be a priest, and Beyer facilitated Clarence's admission to St. Lawrence Seminary High School (SLS) in Mt. Calvary WI for the following year. Because the Constance family could not afford the tuition, the bishop of the Diocese of Marquette had the diocese pay the bill.

Clarence had never heard of the Capuchins before arriving at SLS for his second year of high school, and later said that in his three years at SLS, never once did anyone try to recruit him or invite him to consider a Capuchin vocation. ("After all," he would say, "I was there on the Marquette diocese's dime!") And yet he wasn't at SLS very long at all before he started

picturing himself as living the Capuchin lifestyle and charism. In writing about his impressions he wrote, "I was attracted by the poverty, simplicity and manly austerity which I saw in the Fathers. I loved them...." For nearly three years Clarence told no one that he was considering a Capuchin vocation. But by and by he made up his mind about what he wanted to do.

Shortly before his 1945 graduation from SLS Clarence told his parents that he wanted to join the Capuchin Order. His mother supported his decision but his father was less enthusiastic. He would have preferred Clarence become a diocesan priest, but would support his son's decision nonetheless.

Having discussed a Capuchin vocation with his parents, his next stop was at the door of the SLS rector, Gerald. Jogues wrote of that encounter:

One day I rapped on the door of Fr. Rector's office, Fr. Gerald, and immediately I laid open my desire. "Do you think I might be able to join the Order, Father?" With a gentle smile tugging at his cheeks, Fr. Gerald calmly replied, "I certainly think you can, Clarence." That was it.

But that wasn't quite 'it.' Clarence had yet to tell the bishop of Marquette — who had paid Clarence's tuition at SLS for three years, thinking he was educating a future diocesan priest. Of that meeting Jogues wrote, "My interview with Bishop Wagner was not...smooth." The bishop had not only arranged for Clarence's tuition to be paid for three years, but he had provided Clarence with a summer job between school years as well! He demanded an explanation and wanted to know if the Capuchins had pressured Clarence in any way to join them.

Clarence assured the bishop that he had not been pressured, and that in fact his request for admission to the order was surprising to many of the Capuchins. Wagner asked if Clarence could repay the diocese for the three years of tuition that had been paid. Clarence responded that he could not, but that he knew a Marquette diocesan student could easily receive a scholarship from SLS if need warranted. With that the bishop told Clarence to kneel. "You will go with my blessing," he said, and Clarence received it with gratitude.

On 29 November 1944 Clarence completed the application for admission to the Capuchin Order. In response to the application's question of why he wanted to become a religious he responded, "Because I feel that in this way I can do more for God."

Clarence was accepted into the novitiate and invested in the Capuchin habit in March 1945 at St. Felix Monastery in Huntington IN. He was given the name Jogues. So began his life of service to God, the order and the church as a Capuchin Friar.

Slightly more than one year later he began studies in Garrison NY and then Marathon WI. He excelled as a student, made his perpetual profession in 1949, and was ordained by William O'Conner at St. Mary's Church in Marathon WI in August 1953.

Three years after Jogues' ordination he was sent to International College in Rome where he obtained a canon law degree. Upon completion of those studies in 1958 Jogues returned to

Marathon WI where he would stay for twelve years ministering as dean of studies at St. Anthony's and Third Order director.

At the provincial chapter of 1970 the brothers elected Jogues to serve as a provincial councilor. He moved to St. Bonaventure's in Detroit MI the same year and continued his ministry as Third Order director until 1973. In 1974 he was appointed the local minister of St. Bonaventure's and began serving as spiritual assistant and chaplain to the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO). This ministry with the SFO community resulted in some very meaningful relationships for Jogues that would last for the rest of his life. His ties in the SFO community ran so deep that some would later say they rivaled the depth of his relationships with his Capuchin brothers.

In the 1990s Jogues served as director of Monte Alverno Retreat Center, and as chaplain at St. Francis Home in Fond Du Lac, still maintaining his work with the SFOs. In August 1997 he retired and moved to St. Crispin Community in Washington MI, but continued his ministry with the SFO.

Throughout his life Jogues had a special place in his heart for the disenfranchised. He had the patience to listen to those others shunned and avoided, and those people sought him out. Even in retirement he would be visited by these troubled folks frequently. He would greet them and listen to their stories and woes, and offer them words of consolation and remind them of God's unconditional love for them. He would then send them on their way, or so he thought. Friars who lived with him said they often discovered some of Jogues' visitors wandering the halls long after Jogues had said goodbye, and they would have to be the one to escort the reluctant-to-leave visitor to the door.

At the provincial chapter 2008, at 80 years of age, Jogues served as parliamentarian; his mind was sharp as ever. Later that year Jogues had to have back surgery and a year later in September 2009 had to undergo hip surgery and rehabilitation. During that rehab his brothers and others noticed Jogues was suffering from a loss of balance, memory loss and confusion. When Jogues' niece noticed the same on a visit to St. Crispin's she insisted he be admitted to the hospital for testing. Tests revealed Jogues had a stage 4 cancerous brain tumor. In spite of surgery, the prognosis was that Jogues would not live to see Christmas.

When he was assessed as appropriate for hospice care in November, the friars at St. Bonaventure's welcomed Jogues into their community. Hospice care was provided by hospice staff who came to the monastery. Fraternal life and love was provided by the friars as they sat with him to visit, to pray, and to be with Jogues when he died. On the morning of 19 December 2009 — with David Heffron sitting at his side, Jogues passed into eternal life.

— *Mark Carrico*