

Top of the morning to you! May the rest of the day be yours!

My name is Chuck Ryan. I am Sister Zacchaeus's nephew. I shared Sister's love and interest in our family genealogy. I am also known as R-2.9.11.4 in Irish Roots and B-1.4.7.11.4 in I Thank God for all my memories.

Sister was many things to many people. She was a daughter, sister and relative to a proud Irish family, a nun devoted to God and the teachings of the Catholic Church, a teacher to thousands of children and adults, a world traveler, an author, a great friend to anyone she met and an expert in genealogy. Sister could make new friends like no other person you will ever meet. This came in handy for Sister in her quest to learn about her family's history.

Sister was only 3 ½ pounds when she was born in St. Paul. She grew up on the Ryan Family Farm in St. Patrick and the Brennan Family House just down the street here in Lakeville. Sister was the oldest child to Frank and Margaret Ryan. She had fond memories of growing up with her six siblings. At sixteen she entered the Convent at Sinsinawa to become a Dominican Nun. She finished high school there at the academy and began her training.

One of my favorite stories was when the family was moving between St. Patrick and Lakeville, it was decided that she would go to a private school and live at a relative's home. Sister and her mother had a code. When sending a message home to her mother, Sister would describe how the new shoes fit which would actually be her explanation of how the new school was. Well the shoes pinched at first but then they started to fit.

Later when Monsignor Brynes, her mom and dad brought her down to Sinsinawa to enter the convent, they would use the code again. The next day after they dropped her off, her mother called Sister Benedicta at the Mound to ask how sister was adjusting. Sister Benedicta told her mother that she was lonesome and missed her family.

Sister Benedicta then said “But that’s good because if she didn’t love and miss her family she wouldn’t love us”. Sister communicated back to her family that the new shoes fit just fine!

Sister made her profession as a nun on August 5, 1942 and received her first of many assignments. There are too many assignments to list today. I have created a timeline of events in Sister’s Life that include her numerous assignments. I have it with me today if anyone is interested in seeing it. She was stationed in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, and California in many different parishes in these states.

Along the way she made many friends and had some chance meetings with people that became lifelong friends on trains, in class rooms, in hospitals, and through her genealogy searches. Distance relatives became close friends. I know I can’t remember all of them and the stories of how they met. But I do recall a few.

She met David Nasby the Lutheran Minister on a train and they became lifelong friends. David and his family traveled to Minnesota to join us celebrate Sister’s Golden Jubilee in 1992. She also met Father Benedicta Osta who later became Bishop of Patna, India on a train. She had been in touch with him as recently as last year.

A nurse in Milwaukee she met in a Lutheran Hospital where she walked into the emergency room with gall bladder problems. While asleep after surgery the nurse was afraid to touch her because sister was a catholic nun. The nurse, Faye Leatherman, had still been keeping in touch with sister four decades later. They asked Sister to meet with student nurses and the staff gave her a special angel centerpiece which she gave back to Faye a few years ago. Faye called me last year trying to reach Sister. We spoke for 45 minutes about how incredible Sister Z was.

Nancy Banks, who she met at Northwestern University at a science workshop for teachers, became one of Sister’s best friends and a source for many entertaining stories of their travels together. There are a lot of Sister and Nancy stories.

Cheri Kluevers was another one of sister's best friends who she met at an RCIA Program for people joining the catholic religion. She even traveled with sister to Ireland three times. Cheri was a great comfort to sister in her last days.

Father John Roach, who later became Archbishop, was not only a close relative but a close personal friend. They communicated often. Sister spoke about Father Tom Garvey and attending his first mass at St. Marks in St. Paul. Sister also stayed in contact with Father Frank Roach. Both are here today.

Many of her first grade students kept in contact with her. They became doctors, nurses, attorneys, entrepreneurs, US Ambassadors, Professional athletes and well rounded and educated people. Sister touched many people's lives through education. These students later sent invites for her to visit them as adults. Some parents and parishioners even sent her on a trip to Europe which included spending money for her.

She was a guest of two former students playing in the Notre Dame/ Army Game one year. The players became All American players for the Notre Dame. They introduced her to all the players. She treated her students with a visit from Tony Oliva, the Great Minnesota Twin Baseball player while teaching in Faribault. The town sold out of baseballs when word out that he would be there to sign autographs. Three of those students spoke years later about the impact that had on their lives. One of them became a professional football player for the Minnesota Vikings.

Sister Zacchaeus was also a world traveler. She traveled to Ireland a total of nine times. She also traveled to Rome, Italy, France, England, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, Japan, Haiti, and all across the United States. She visited the Vatican. There are people all over the world that have been touched by sister and claim her as a friend.

On her first visit to Murroe, County Limerick Ireland, where the Ryan ancestry traces back to, she was introduced to Father Mark Tierney at the nearby Glenstal Abbey. He had recently written a book on the families in the area which included the Ryan's. He helped her find the Old Annaugh Church Ruins and Cemetery where her Great Great Grandfather Darby Ryan grave rests in a 12<sup>th</sup> century church ruins.

During her genealogy quest she met a fifth cousin, Fintan Callinan, in Ireland. She visited his family in Ireland on numerous trips. They became good friends and communicated often until his death in January. Father Martin Garry was a friend from Bolton Abbey who she visited also when in Ireland.

Sister researched Parish records, cemeteries, county and state records and created a network of relatives to gather current information. She did this here in America and in Ireland. She researched at the Mormons Facility in Salt Lake City. Sister helped others with their own genealogy and shared her information and wisdom. She acquired the help of priests, authors and historians. She of course made more friends along the way.

Sister published two books about our families and each year has sent updates with all with the new births, deaths and weddings. Since these books were published she has continued to update and add pictures, stories, articles, etc. to these books. These books link you to your ancestors. The stories talk about their struggles, accomplishments, sad times, good times and lessons learned in life.

If there was an important family event sister always made an effort to attend.

Sister orchestrated many events including the 125<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary of Bethlehem Academy in Faribault, Parish Events, Family Reunions, including the Ryan, Garry, Brennan, Hickey Family Reunion in 1979 with over 650 people in St. Patrick's, the location where her Great Grandfather John D. Ryan settled upon arriving from Ireland.

If you knew Sister Zacchaeus, you know she was short in height but a giant when it came to bonding our extended families together. She could organize the troops, delegate the work and get great things accomplished. Her grandfather used to say “All officers and no soldiers”. She was an officer with a whole army of soldiers! Several years ago she asked me if I was interested in taking over this responsibility. She has been training me ever since. We have enjoyed many hours of storytelling together. I ask you all to help me with this as we go forward by providing me your updated information, stories, etc..

I have since learned to appreciate the tremendous amount of energy and time she has devoted to this in the last 40 plus years. I have a strip showing a branch starting with her parents Frank and Margaret Ryan. This has almost 200 names. This branch continues to grow. Just recently this branch sprouted another twig, another generation, her great grand nephew.

I was thinking about how Sister has touched each new generation when I remembered reading an essay I found from the numerous boxes and books that Sister has given me. A great niece of hers, Tara Yorek, wrote this essay as part of her entry in the Ms. Shamrock contest in LeCenter a few years ago. Tara wrote about how proud she was of her Irish roots. She wrote about how her Great Aunt Sister Zacchaeus had been working on the family genealogy for over forty years. She wrote about her Grandmother Sylvia’s memories. She ended her essay with the Irish Blessing that’s on the back of the program. I am sure most of you have heard it before.

Sister liked to tell people that her two nephews, my brother Gerry and I brought her to Ireland two years ago along with her friend Cheri. Actually Sister brought us. We might have driven the car across Ireland, but she gave us all the trip of a lifetime. This trip has been referred to as “The Abbess, The General and the two lieutenants.” Cheri and I were the lieutenants.

We saw and did things tourists don’t typically get to do. We went to the United States Embassy for a private meeting with the US Ambassador.

I told a few of these stories last Sunday, but I would like to tell everyone else today: When sister taught first grade in Northfield, Illinois some fifty years ago, she had twin brothers in her class one year. One of them turned out to be the US Ambassador to Ireland. Sister had kept in contact with his family all these years, so of course we needed to visit him in Dublin.

We went to the Embassy early and there was a long line. We were at the end of the line talking and the next thing we knew, Sister was up at the “front of the line” at the guard tower entrance. She had made fast friends with the guards and we were waved up to the front. Sister had this little way of always being at the front of the line. If you knew sister, you’d know what I’m talking about. I might be exaggerating a little, but there seemed to be at least seven layers of security. There were forms to fill out, they were frisking people and interviewing people. Sister explained that the Ambassador was a former first grade student of hers. She had this old photo of about 45 first grade students with this short little nun standing in the middle of them. He was the little boy standing right in front of her. Sister did her magic, the guards loved her, so no security checks on us and we were ushered in to meet with the ambassador right away.

We visited Abbey’s, met distance relatives, experienced the real people of Ireland, and saw a country so beautiful that I thought we were already in heaven. We had a special moment returning to Murroe and the Abington cemetery where I prayed to My Great Great Great Grandfather Darby Ryan. I could go on for hours about our trip. We had quite a history lesson while in Northern Ireland too. And, during the whole trip, Sister made many Rosaries while we traveled in the car.

Sister made thousands of rosaries over the last sixty years. She continued this until her last days. There were beads and wire clippings under her bed even on her last days. She, of course, has recruited several people who are now making rosaries. She even has my dad growing Jobe's tears plants. These rosaries have made their way all over the world. The last shipment is on its way to Trinidad. Can you imagine how many people are praying with these rosaries? The rosary that

sister was buried with was blessed by Pope Benedict at the Vatican. Her great niece, Debbie, was there this summer and brought it back for her.

My wife, children, friends and my co-workers often joke about the number of people I know because of the large family we have and the business that I'm in. Well, I don't hold a candle to Sister on the number of people she knew. When we were walking through a cemetery on our trip, Sister found an engraving on the back of a gravestone. She grabbed me and said "I found our motto"! It read "Well connected and much respected". That was her alright!

When news of her illness spread early last year, the news made its way back to a very famous Pianist from Ireland, Phil Coulter. He was one of sister's favorite musicians. I believe the message got back to him via John and Mary Scanlon, parishioners from St. Albert's in Minneapolis. He wrote a letter to sister in February, 2007 wishing her well. I don't think sister ever met Phil Coulter but she did have a chance meeting with his nephew in Dingle, Ireland.... of course.

For those of you that were at the Mound for her funeral last weekend. Did you see the eagle fly over? Did you notice sister's grave was at the front of the line. There is always a sign or a reminder of Sister Zacchaeus. There are many more stories about sister to share. Please share them with everyone after the service today. She would love that.

I was fortunate to spend a lot of time with her and her siblings in her last days. I say this to my cousins and their extended families: Your parents: Bud, Lois, Sylvia, Terry, Larry and my dad Jim are also some great story tellers. Please ask them to share their stories with you. They are entertaining and sometimes educational stories. Write them down if you can.

I would like to share a passage that sister read just recently in a book about dying.

As long as we can love each other, and remember the feeling of love we had, we can die without ever really going away. All the love you created is still there. You

live on – in the hearts of everyone you have touched and nurtured while you were here.

God, we all loved Sister Zacchaeus very much, she is a special angel and I know she is looking after us all! Until we meet again.

Chuck Ryan

### **Sister Zacchaeus Significant dates**

November 27, 1922	Born in St. Paul 3 ½ Pounds
December 10, 1922	Baptized at St. Paul Cathedral
March 19, 1924	Sister Margaret Patricia born died two months later
May 4, 1925	Sister Lois is born
September 16, 1926	Brother Bud is born
1927	Moved to Lakeville at Jack Brennan House
December 28, 1927	Sister Sylvia is born
1927	Moved to Ryan Farm in St. Patrick
April 13, 1929	Sister Terry was born
1929	Attended School at St Patrick
June 12, 1929	Grandma Ryan dies
1930	Moved to Jordan
1930	Attended St. John's School
1931	Moved to Lakeville
1931	Attended Lakeville School
June 2, 1931	All Saints Church burns
August 29, 1931	Sister Madonna was born. She died two months later
October, 1932	Sister Mary was born. She died two days later
1932-	Attended St. Patrick School



	Attended St. Catherine's School while staying at Henry Ryan's Home
July 16, 1932	Private First Communion
May, 1934	First Communion with Lois and Bud
Fall 1936	Stayed with Grandma Brennan and attended Lakeville High School (Weekends in St. Patrick)
October 19, 1936	Confirmed at St. Patrick's by Archbishop Murray
January 23, 1938	Brother Jimmy was born in Minneapolis
April, 1939	Grandpa Ryan and his brother die within 24 hours
August 1939	Consulted Monsignor Brynes about entering the convent He spoke with Mother Samuel, the Mother General of the Sinsinawa Dominicans for advice.
August 20, 1939	Parents and Monsignor Brynes deliver Sister to Mound
1939-1940	Attends school at the Academy
August 4, 1941	Reception Day
August 5, 1942	Profession
1942-1945	Received First Mission Assignment St. Brendan, Chicago
1942	Baby brother is delivered stillborn
1943	Brother Bud enter into US Army
Summer, 1945	Prepared for Final Preparation at the Mound
August 5-10, 1945	Home Visit
August, 1945-1947	Assigned to St. Malachy's, Geneseo in Illinois
1945	Tooth infection results in nerve damage to right arm
1947-1954	Assigned to St. James in Kenosha, Wisconsin Taught First Grade
Feb 28, 1948	Grandma Brennan dies in Lakeville
May, 1948	Mom, Lois and Aunt Mame Kohls visit Kenosha
1950	Mom, Dad and Jimmy visit in Kenosha
1950	Visited Father John Roach (later Archbishop) at St. Thomas Academy

Summer, 1954	Assigned to Assigned to study at St. Norberts, DePere, Wisconsin
Fall, 1954-1959	Assigned to teach at St. Peter, Anaconda, Montana
June, 1955	Summer religion at Wesby, Montana
1955	Attended Father Garvey first mass at St. Marks, St. Paul
Summer, 1957	Assigned to begin Theology studies at Holy Rosary in Minneapolis
Fall, 1957-1967	Assigned to St. Philip Convent, Northfield, Illinois to teach first grade
March 8, 1964	Cardinal Meyer dedicates new Church in Northfield
January 29, 1964	Monsignor Brynes dies. Attended funeral
1964	Visit from Mom and Dad and a trip to Elgin where John R. Ryan was born
1964	Terry and Sue visit. Meet Rowell Family
1964	Numerous train trips to visit Dad (poor health)
1964	Meet David Nasby and Father Benedict Osta (later bishop of Patna, India on train (beginning of long relationship with both
1966	Visited Notre Dame and attended Notre Dame –Army Game as a quest of Tom Regner (former student from Kenosha) who was an All American that year and got to meet all the players after the game. Steve Quinn from St. Philips also played in game
1967	Celebrated Silver Jubilee at Mound and Lakeville
August, 1967-1968	Assigned to Visitation Convent in Chicago
August, 1967	Irene Ziv visits and presents a gift from the parishioners of Northfield: A trip to Rome with spending money.
October, 1967	While on a visit to Milwaukee, Spend two weeks in a Luthern Hospital for Gall Bladder Surgery. Make lifelong friendship with Nurse Faye Leatherman
November 27, 1967	Celebrate 45 birthday watching nurses eat cake after Gall Bladder Surgery

July, 1967	Trip to Europe includes Rome, Florence, Venice, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France and Ireland
July, 1967	Visits the Ryan's Ancestral Home in Murroe, County Limerick, Ireland for the first time
August, 1967	Shares stories of Trip with parents
Fall, 1967	Meet Nancy Banks at Northwestern University during a science workshop for teachers. This was the beginning of a long friendship
1968-1971	Assigned to St. Mary's in Evanston, Illinois
Fall, 1971-1972	Taught First grade at Faribault Immaculate Conception School, Faribault, MN
June, 1972	Celebrate Parents Golden Wedding Anniversary at All Saints in Lakeville
1972	Trip to California with Nancy Banks
September, 1972-1979	Returned to teach First Grade at St. Mary's in Evanston, Illinois
1973	Trip to New England and Canada with Nancy Banks
January 26, 1974	Dad, T. Frank Ryan passes away
Spring, 1974	Mom comes to Evanston for an extended stay
June 1974	Nephew Gerry Ryan and Niece Gail Ryan fly in for a visit and we all travel bring mom back to Minnesota
Summer, 1974	Trip to St Anne, Quebec, Canada and Washington with Nancy Banks and Sister Leahy
1975	Trip to North Carolina and Virginia
July 16, 1976	Attend Installation of Archbishop Roach as Sixth Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis
Summer, 1976	Masters Program at Mundelein College in Religion and Sociology.
Summer, 1976	Trip to Haiti with Madeleine
1977	Trip to Europe with Janet and Nancy banks includes: Rome, The Vatican, Sistine Chapel, St. Peters, Vienna, Germany (visit nephew Gerry Ryan in Army), Paris, London, Edinburgh, Scotland, and Ireland

1978-1983	Assigned to Immaculate Conception School in Faribault, Minnesota
1978	Trip to Haiti again with Nancy and Madeleine
1979	Trip to Ireland, Scotland and England with Nancy
July 1, 1979	Family Reunion at St Patricks
October, 1980	Manuscript for "Irish Roots" is sent to printer
December 22, 1980	Copy of "Irish Roots" arrive.
December 23, 1980	Mom, Margaret E. Ryan passes away.
July 7, 1981	Another trip to Ireland and Scotland with Nancy Banks, Sylvia Doerr (sister) and Margaret Hermes
June, 1983-1987	Assigned to be Librarian and teacher at Annunciation in Minneapolis
1983	"I Thank God for All My Memories" is printed
1985	Trip to Ireland and Scotland with Nancy
1987	Trip to Germany with Nancy and Sylvia
1987-1988	Went with Sister Catherine Lyons to St. Johns, Napa, California to start RCIA Program, etc Began Friendship with Cheri Kluevers and numerous visits to the Garvey Families in Flora Springs
Spring, 1989-1990	Assigned to Sacred Heart, Faribault, MN as DRE
February 9, 1990	Good friend Nancy Banks dies
Spring, 1990-1992	Assigned position of Religion Chairperson at Bethlehem Academy in Fairbault, MN
Spring, 1992	Celebrate 125 <sup>th</sup> year of Bethlehem Academy in Faribault
1992	Ireland Trip includes Retreat at Bolten Abbey with Cheri Kluever to celebrate Golden Jubilee Year
1992	Celebrate Golden Jubilee with over 300 family and friends at the St Patrick's
1992	Celebrate Golden Jubilee with family and Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
August, 1992-1993	Assigned to St. Mary's in Portage
1993-1995	Assigned to Bethlehem Academy in Faribault

Summer, 1995	Ireland Trip with Cheri Kluevers. Linda, Rita and Ann Beuch for a week and ten days with Tom and Vicki Lindquist
1995-1998	Assigned to St. Mary's in Portage
1996	Trip to California
1997	Trip to California
1998-2001	Assigned to Cuba City, Wisconsin (Ten miles from mound) Begin working with computer
September, 2001	Ireland trip with Cheri Kluevers, Lorraine Kerndt and her friend Cheri
July, 2001	Attended Western Province Gathering in Spokane and a visit to Cheri Kluevers in Napa, California
June, 2001- 2008	Moved to Minneapolis and form Community with Sister Doris Rauenhorst at Seward Tower West
May 2006	Final Visit to Ireland with Friend Cheri Kluevers and nephews Gerry Ryan and Chuck Ryan (Stories of The Abyss, The General and the Two Lieutenants begin)
January, 2007	Diagnosed with Cancer
Spring, 2008	Return to Mound for care, many family and friends visit
August 14, 2008	Ss Mary Zacchaeus Ryan passes away.