



## Hospital Sisters of St. Francis

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From: Brian C. Blasco

Director of Communications and Archivist - Assistant Coordinator of Community Life

Date: April 10, 2025

RE: Sister Jovita Janning, OSF

Birth	February 27, 1842, in Neuenkirchen, Germany, and named Elisabeth
Parents	Bernhart H. and Maria Catharina (Schuemann) Janning
Entered HSOSF	April 4, 1868
Profession of First Vows	June 23, 1870
Missionary to the USA	October 1875 at age 33

### Assignments

Belleville, IL	St. Elizabeth's Hospital	November 13, 1875	Superior/Administrator
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1876	
Highland, IL	St. Joseph's Hospital	1878	
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1884	

Recalled to Germany April 27, 1884

Left the Community October 11, 1885



Belleville, December 4, 1875

P.b.J.Chr.

Dear Most Reverend Mother!

Finally a few lines from America, the worst is that it takes so long to fly over, and we have to wait so long to hear something from the Motherhouse and our Reverend Mother.

Dear Reverend Mother, how are you, are you well? I hope so by God's grace.

Every day we pray fervently for you. Frequently we ask how it might be in Germany, we see and hear nothing.

Dear Reverend Mother, my heart was heavy after you left us in Rotterdam and we were all alone. Often I thought is it true or do I dream. I could not grasp it that we were traveling to America and yet we were already on the boat. My head was full of thoughts of you, dear Reverend Mother.

It was so hard, even after we arrived in New York. At the beginning I blamed myself because I still felt sick from our voyage. I hardly would walk by myself. Sister Zosima was my support. I have to thank both Sisters, Zosima and Chrispina, for their kindnesses but all of them were very nice. Mostly I enjoyed the Sisters in New York who were so kind and loving. I was there in bed all day until we had to continue our travels in the evening. That was another long trip, two days and two nights, but soon time has gone by and Saturday night at 8:00 o'clock we arrived in Alton. We did not know what was ahead of us. Four carriages awaited us and up- and down-hill we went until we stopped in front of the Cathedral. We were terribly moved when we saw everything. The Most Superior Bishop welcomed us with a short speech and admonished us that we should not regret having found here a second home. We would see how much we were welcome in Alton and in America, which was real soon evident. The people came from everywhere and brought us goods so we were not in need of anything. All this was very nice, but with a deep sigh we received the news of another separation. And I could not believe it when I heard the decision, I would

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not have dreamed it, it was so hard, that it occurred to me I should have informed the Motherhouse that I was sick. Before I could follow, now I had to go ahead. How lucky the Sisters are in Germany where Reverend Mother leads. But Sister Gerburgis said in God's name be content, we can do it alone. Thus on Thursday, November 11, after we received the episcopal blessing, we continued our travels. The Sisters going to St. Louis and we to Belleville traveled a while together. Where Sister Henriette got off we were met by the Most Reverend Father Zumbusch. We had to travel approximately another hour. I was always glad when the train went on, so that we did not have to get out. But we finally arrived in Belleville. I still felt I was dreaming. But now it was over, a splendid carriage awaited us. When I was ever able to pray, it was now. Father Zumbusch reassured us that we would get a good Father. We should only hold on to him. Soon the carriage stopped in front of the church, with the parsonage adjacent. The Most Reverend Father Hinsen, most friendly welcomed us. When we only saw his face we felt better. At first we were led into the church, which was very large and beautiful. After we prayed to our dear Savior at our new destination we went back to the parsonage and coffee. After that both Priests led us to the School-Sisters. There we were received by the Mother Superior and all Sisters, 27 Sisters. We could not believe it. Everyone was very kind and friendly. The good Sisters had provided one room, for us, plain and beautiful just like a Franciscan room. In the evening, during free time, all Sisters returned to us, and we talked a lot. In the end we all sang the Te Deum and then retired. We stayed the night because the apartment was not quite ready. The following morning at 6:30 we heard the first Holy Mass in the convent, after that we had coffee. At one o'clock we went to church in the school messhall. The orderly behavior among adults and children is much to be admired, as if ten Priests are directing them and yet there are only two. The answer is that the Priests don't shy away from any effort. Here in Belleville

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one finds bitter enemies of the church, the many free masons. They have taken great pains in giving the Priests a bad name and are especially aiming at Pastor Hinsen. Then late during the night, as Reverend Father tells, they called him, he stopped and said, if the dear Lord had not helped, I don't know what might have happened to me.

Already three times a fire in the tower of this beautiful church has been started, so that the flames were visible. Pastor Hinsen has several times been pursued in his house with the intention to kill him but the dear Lord has prevented it. Every night for two months 20 people stood guard. Now one person daily walks round the church and parsonage. For us it is also rather strange. The arch enemy of the church had to flee and in his apartment we first live until the other apartment is ready. No other place was available.

We hope to be in our intended apartment which is close to the church around Christmas. We have not been there yet. The Most Reverend Father does not want us to see it until it is ready. We are supposed to have a little chapel so that at times one can read Holy Mass there.

If we only could ask you for a missal. We have nothing, dear Reverend Mother, please have pity on us children in America.

Now I have to start from the beginning again.

Two o'clock in the afternoon both reverend gentlemen accompanied us to our apartment. There were six ladies busy; they had prepared everything to the minutest detail. A stove with all pots and pans, laundry barrels, laundry soap, pliers, ink, paper and pen, three new thimbles, white and black thread, white and black ribbon, sewing needles, three new irons, and milk, eggs, bread, meat, sauerkraut. The people bring everything to the house. One day we had no bread for the next morning. We prayed to St. Joseph and the next morning when we were about to drink coffee, someone knocked on the door and there stood a man with

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bread. We asked how much and the answer was nothing and he would deliver it every morning. Where he lives, we were not supposed to know. And this has happened now for three weeks.

One day Sister Gerburga said to Sister Silvana you cannot take so much wood it is almost used up. Sister Silvana replied she will tell St. Joseph. The same afternoon we received a cart-load of wood, it was the son of a farmer. The people are all so dear and kind. Belleville is large; it has 20,000 inhabitants of which 10,000 are catholic and almost all are German.

Dear Reverend Mother, if only you could see us here once, you would be delighted and we much more. But we want to take comfort in God's name, since it is not possible. We have four sick people in town. One old protestant lady whose son is supposed to be the first in the free masons. We were barely a week there and they gave us \$20 for the nursing which can take a long time. Dear Reverend Mother the beautiful Christmas Season is approaching. Every day we talk about it and in our thoughts we unite in front of the manger and wish with all our hearts you and all the Sisters a Merry Christmas. The dear Christ child with its charity and mercy. We especially here in America ask for your prayers. A thousand thanks to God that we found here a strict Father. He watches us all the time that we don't live recklessly. The old year is coming to an end and who would have thought that we would be in America. What the next year will bring only the Almighty God knows.

But we want, dear Reverend Mother, to send you and all the dear Sisters from far away America blessed New Year wishes. Without God's Will nothing comes to pass.

Dear Reverend Mother, here in America the weather and the people are similar, e.g. changeable. Today and tomorrow everything with steam.

We again ask for your prayers, In Jesus' and Mary's name we

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remain with thousand good wishes.  
Dear Reverend Mother, a few lines.  
With all my love and admiration,

Sister Jovita  
Hospital Sister of St. Francis







[illegible]



[illegible]



[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]



(Ich habe ich noch anzufragen, Virginia Louisa und Tische in die Thier-  
gasse alle mit Rindern zusammen, wie Thierthier, wie Thierthier, wie Thierthier,  
so Rindern, wie sie 6 Personen: Was auch in der Thierthier, wie Thierthier,  
was auch 6 Personen, wie Thierthier, wie Thierthier, wie Thierthier, wie Thierthier,

Bedenke dich, daß du nicht die Liebe Gottes durch deine Sünden  
 verlierst. Denn die Liebe Gottes ist die Frucht der Gerechtigkeit.  
 Und die Gerechtigkeit ist die Frucht der Liebe. Wenn du die Liebe  
 Gottes verlierst, verlierst du auch die Frucht der Gerechtigkeit.  
 Und die Frucht der Gerechtigkeit ist das Leben. Wenn du das Leben  
 verlierst, verlierst du auch die Frucht der Gerechtigkeit. Und die Frucht  
 der Gerechtigkeit ist das Leben. Wenn du das Leben verlierst, verlierst du  
 auch die Frucht der Gerechtigkeit. Und die Frucht der Gerechtigkeit ist  
 das Leben. Wenn du das Leben verlierst, verlierst du auch die Frucht  
 der Gerechtigkeit. Und die Frucht der Gerechtigkeit ist das Leben.

[illegible]

Ja der Linder Fische und Wärrer sind ungemacht und  
aus dem unglücklichen Zustand.

*Mit allen Linden aus Geseffnung Df Novita.  
Pneumothosphorus. Df f. Franziskus.*

