



## Sister Joy! To the World

### Senior Novice

My first contact with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence was virtual, but memorable. In the early 1990's (most likely on PBS) I saw the Sisters in the background of a documentary about the struggle for LGBTQ rights. I was a young, recently-out, struggling Catholic boy from a small city, and I remember feeling transfixed, fascinated, and more than a bit scared.

As I became more comfortable in my queer skin, I learned to see the Sisters as heroes. I came to admire their camp and irreverence; these nuns in whiteface reminded me of the faerie brothers and sisters I had come to love. They were bold, fearless, comical, gender-bending, hell-raising radicals, committed to social activism, public service, and the all-important expiation of universal guilt. I was eager to become a Sister, and to spread my own version of Joy! to the world. I think there is something truly "catholic" in my calling to the Sisters.

On the one hand, I admired the nuns who were so formative in my childhood. From them, I learned so many things that I continue to treasure: they taught me about the mysterious and enduring nature of faith, they filled my head with mysterious tales of the Christian saints, many of who aspired to make the world a better place. These sisters also taught me to love beauty, to pay attention to grammar, and to do long division, and I have used two of these three gifts for my entire life. But catholic also means diverse, all-embracing, and universal, and I feel excited to spread my own version of sparkle, glamour, fun, and love in a universal, all-embracing way.

I feel that all of our queer and straight brothers and sisters can benefit from a warm smile, an open heart, and a bit of queer ridiculousness. As Sister Joy! to the World, I would like to spread a little bit of joy to everyone who crosses my path. I'd like to use this in the service of activism, to help make our DC community a better, richer, and more interesting place to be.