

Alleluia!

Sister M. Canisia Binka, OSF



Sister Canisia Binka was born on September 19, 1904, in Joliet, Illinois, to Theodore and Catherine Hartung Binka. Baptized Elizabeth Catherine at St. John the Baptist Church, she was one of eleven children. She was preceded in death by her sisters, Clara, Helen and Dorothy and her brother, Clarence, as well as six little ones who died in infancy. Her cousin was our deceased Sister Clotine Siegel.

Elizabeth attended St. John's School and St. Francis Academy. On November 10, 1924, she entered the Postulancy. She credited her mother and the sisters at St. John's and SFA, especially Sister Chrysantha, with encouraging her vocation. On August 12, 1925, Elizabeth entered the Novitiate and received the name Sister Mary Canisia.

As a religious, Canisia completed her high school education, received a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in German and a Master's Degree in the Seraphic Institute of Theology from the College of St. Francis. She kept herself updated through courses and workshops and always enjoyed a good book and a good educational program on television.

After her profession of vows on August 12, 1927, Sister Canisia began her 52 years of teaching kindergarten through fifth grade at various schools in Alabama, Illinois and Ohio. This included seven years at St. Ann's in Lansing, Illinois, nine years at St. Clement's in Chicago and a total of 10 years at St. Mary's in Fairfield, Alabama.

When she was leaving St. Ann's in 1975, an article in the parish bulletin stated, "During her sojourn here in Lansing, Sister has endeared herself both to the students and their parents. In the classroom, she was always 'in charge', balancing discipline and firmness with a delightful blend of gentleness and compassion...She has given all of us, both young and old, a fine example...of dedication and witness."

Though Canisia loved teaching wherever she was, she had a special place in her heart for the black students and their families at St. Mary's in Alabama.

She was there during the Selma riots and once wrote that it was a "privilege" to help, "especially through education", the people "obtain the equality and rights citizens had a right to expect."

In 1978, Sister Canisia retired from classroom teaching and moved to the Motherhouse. She spent the next 19 years tutoring at St. Francis Reading Center, being a catechist at St. Bernard's, Joliet, working for the Head Start Program, the RSVP Program through Catholic Charities and volunteering in the Congregation's Development Office. Through the years Canisia received recognition for her dedicated service. The Awards include: Certificate of Lifetime Achievement from the Illinois Department of Aging in 1993, Head Start Volunteer Award in 1994, United Way of Will County Outstanding Volunteer Award in 1994 and Certificate of Recognition for Volunteer Service to St. John's in 1997.

In 1997, when she needed more care and walking became more difficult for her, Sister Canisia moved to Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home. There she passed her days peacefully, visiting others, enjoying the company of her sisters, especially her good friend Angela Marie, and praying for the needs of her family, the Congregation and the world. She was a gracious woman who rarely complained. So on Sunday, December 28th, when she told the nurses she was in pain, they were quite concerned. On Tuesday, December 30th, she was admitted to Provena St. Joseph Medical Center. It was there, after a visit from her nephew on the afternoon of December 31st, she quietly and peacefully went home to her God.

Sister Canisia, we thank you for your 78 years of service with us as teacher, mentor, lover of all God's children and friend. As you begin your eternity with the God you served so lovingly and faithfully, remember us, your family, your friends, and your Franciscan Sisters. Amen. Alleluia!

Sister Mary Canisia Binka, OSF
19 September 1904 - 31 December 2003

Born: September 19, 1904, Joliet, Illinois 836
Parents: Theodore and Catherine (Hartung) Binka
Entered From: St. John the Baptist, Joliet, Illinois
Postulancy: November 10, 1924
Novitiate: August 12, 1925
Profession: August 12, 1927
Entered New Life: Wednesday, December 31, 2003; Provena-St. Joseph Medical Center; 5:45 p.m.

Ministry History

1926 - 1930 Teacher, Grades 1, 2 & 3; St. Boniface, Chicago, IL
 1930 - 1939 Teacher, Grade 2 & 5; St. Clement, Chicago, IL
 1939 - 1941 Teacher, Grade 4 & 5; SS. Peter and Paul, Chicago, IL
 1941 - 1945 Teacher, Grade 4; Sacred Heart, Englewood, IL
 1945 - 1948 Teacher, Grades 2, 3 & 4; St. Mary Magdalene, Columbus, OH
 1948 - 1954 Teacher, Grade 1; St. Mary, Fairfield, AL
 1954 - 1956 Teacher, Kindergarten; Guardian Angel Home, Joliet, IL
 1956 - 1957 Teacher, Grades 1, 2, 3 & 4; Sacred Heart, Lillyville, IL
 1957 - 1958 Prefect; Guardian Angel Home & Teacher, Grade 1, St. Procopius, Chicago, IL
 1958 - 1959 Teacher, Grade 2; Holy Family, Cleveland, OH
 1959 - 1962 Teacher, Grades 3, 4 & 5; St. Joseph, Manhattan, IL
 1962 - 1963 Teacher, Grade 4; St. Mary Magdalene, Columbus, OH
 1963 - 1967 Teacher, Grades 3 & 4; St. Mary, Fairfield, AL
 1967 - 1968 Teacher, Grades 3; St. Procopius, Chicago, IL
 1968 - 1972 Teacher, Grade 4; St. Ann, Lansing, IL
 1972 - 1973 Teacher, Ungraded class; St. Ann, Lansing, IL
 1973 - 1975 Teacher, Grade 4; St. Ann, Lansing, IL
 1975 - 1978 Teacher, Grades 2, 3 & 4 and Tutor; St. Joseph, Joliet, IL
 1978 - 1989 Tutor; St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL
 1989 - 1992 Tutor, St. Francis Convent; Catechist; St. Bernard, Joliet; Volunteer "Headstart"
 1992 - 1997 Tutor; St. Francis Convent; Volunteer Aide for Headstart Program at St. John
 1997 - 2003 Retired; Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL

Wake: Monday, January 5, 2003, 2 - 6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL
Wake Service: Monday, January 5, 2003, 4:30 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL
Mass of Christian Burial: Monday, January 5, 2003, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL
Burial: Tuesday, January 6; leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m.
 to St. John Cemetery, Joliet, IL
 S8 - L513 - G6

Survived by: Nephews, nieces and cousins.

Rest in Peace, Sister Canisia