



## *Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate*

As the sunshine of the warmest day in September revealed the grandeur of God's creation in all of its splendor, our Sister, Grace Brouch, completed her long-awaited transitus from this life to eternal life. Enfolded in the Light, Love and Peace of Christ, her passing on Friday afternoon, September 22, 2017, gave visible witness to the Epistle of the day as well as the project of her life: *"Pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith and take hold of the eternal life to which you were called"* (1 Tim 6:12). As dreamer, sister, teacher, healer, missionary and companion on the journey of Franciscan life, Gracie "did what was hers to do" and encouraged those whom she loved to do the same.

On January 25, 1931, Louise (Brummel) and John Brouch lovingly welcomed their infant daughter into the world. The second of five children, Jean was baptized and raised in a faith filled family that shared in the life of Annunciation Parish in Aurora, Illinois. Educated by the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate who staffed the parish school, Jean was inspired by their witness to religious life and the Joliet Franciscan charism. However, the nurses at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital captured her imagination as healer and caregiver when, as a young teenager working at the hospital, she witnessed their gentleness and compassion. As Jean concluded her first year of study at Madonna High school with the School Sisters of St. Francis, her desire to become a sister was deepened and intensified. World War II had come to an end and with the support of her family, she became an aspirant at St. Francis Prep in the Fall of 1945. The following year she entered the Postulancy of the Joliet Franciscans.

On August 12, 1947, Jean was received into the novitiate and given the religious name, Sister Mary Grace, a name that suited her well. Two years later, she made her profession of vows. Soon thereafter, she was missioned to teach in the primary grades at Sacred Heart Englewood for two years and then for another four years at Sacred Heart Hubbard Woods. During this time she also completed a Bachelor of Science degree at the College of St. Francis. In 1957, at the invitation of Mother Borromeo, Sister Grace returned to Joliet. Her abiding dream and desire to become a registered nurse was affirmed and soon she began formal studies at St. Joseph School of Nursing with an area of specialization in Psychiatric Nursing. In the years that followed, Sister Grace cared for Sisters in the Motherhouse infirmary and was among the first Sisters to join the staff of Our Lady of Angels when it first opened in January of 1961.

Sister Grace loved the sisters and she loved her ministry. However, in 1972, a new and unexpected call was presented to her by Sister Francine Zeller. A nurse was desperately needed for the Congregation's Brazilian mission in Santa Helena de Goiás. Trusting in God's grace, she responded generously: *"Sim, Senhor! Yes, my Lord!"* Within a year's time, she arrived in Brazil, began to

# *Alleluia!*



## *Sister M. Grace Brouch, OSF*

study Portuguese in Rio de Janeiro, and soon found herself in Santa Helena as well as the surrounding towns of Maurilandia and Castelandia. For the next seventeen years, Sister Grace ministered in diverse capacities in the Diocese of Jataí as well as the Congregation - as nurse, teacher, mentor to young nurses, pastoral minister, director of a children's day care center, administrator of a residential home for sick and disabled elders, and a member of the Regional Council. But for Grace, the Gospel life was about more than ministry. It also was about fidelity to prayer and life in community to which she devoted herself joyfully and wholeheartedly.

In 1990, a new and challenging ministerial opportunity called forth from Grace a renewed passion and concern for the well-being and health care of children, especially those on the margins of society. With a zealous missionary spirit that would make Mother Alfred proud, she assumed a new leadership role in the Archdiocese of Goiânia as the Director of Pastoral Outreach to Children in local municipalities and elsewhere in the state of Goiás. As the years went on, Grace moved into other ministries and communities of faith where she continued to inspire countless people, young and old, religious and lay, privileged and poor, with her gentle Franciscan spirit. When she departed from Brazil in June of 2013, after forty years of dedicated missionary service, Sister Grace, like Saint Francis of Assisi, chose to return to Our Lady of Angels, surrounded by the Sisters and companions with whom she began her Joliet Franciscan journey seventy-two years earlier.

Always a lover of puzzles, the final pieces of the puzzle that was Sister Grace's life began to come together during the months of August and September. Throughout this time, loving, treasured and final visits from Brazilian Sisters, family members, classmates, sisters, associates, friends and caregivers, helped her to bring to completion her wonder-filled puzzle of eighty-six years of life. If we listen carefully to echoes from Eternity, we just may be able hear the clapping of Gracie's hands and her gleeful voice proclaiming: *"Muito bem, I finished it!"* And so let us join our voices to those of Heaven, as we say with loving and grateful hearts: *Alleluia! Alleluia!*

# *Sister M. Grace Brouch, OSF*

*January 25, 1931— September 22, 2017*

*Born:* January 25, 1931  
*Parents:* John E. Brouch and Louise B. (Brummel) Brouch  
*Postulancy:* September 4, 1946  
*Novitiate:* August 12, 1947  
*First Profession:* August 12, 1949  
*Entered New Life:* September 22, 2017

## **Ministry History**

1949-1951 Teacher: Grades 3, 4, Sacred Heart Englewood, Chicago, Illinois  
1951-1957 Teacher: Grade 2, Sacred Heart, Hubbard Woods, Chicago  
1957-1960 Student: St. Joseph Hospital, Joliet, Illinois  
1960-1961 Student: College of St. Francis, Joliet  
1961-1962 Infirmiry Nurse: St. Francis Convent, Joliet  
1962-1965 Infirmiry Nurse: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
1965-1967 Lay Resident's Nurse: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
1967-1969 Director of Health Service: St. Francis Convent, Joliet  
1969-1970 Head Nurse, Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
1970-1972 Nurse, Community Health Service Director: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
1972-1973 Nursing Staff: Hospital in Urbana, Illinois  
1973-1974 Student, Parish Ministry: CENFI, Day Care Center with Clinic, Rio De Janeiro, Santa Helena de Goiás, Brazil  
1974-1975 School Nursing, Parish Ministry, Governing Group: Day Care Center with Clinic, Santa Helena Parish, Brazil  
1975-1976 Director of Day Care Center, Director of Parish Work: Santa Helena Parish, Brazil  
1976-1977 Clinic-Day Care Center, Director Parish Work: Casa da Cridnea, St. Antonio, Santa Helena, Brazil  
1978-1981 R.N. Health Education and Nursing, Day Care Center, Santa Helena, Brazil  
1982 Student: CEFEPAL, Petropolis, R.J.  
1983-1984 R.N., Health Ministry Director Nursing Service, Santa Helena, Brazil  
1985-1989 Pastoral Ministry: Maurilandia, Brazil  
1990 Minister to children, Diocesan Office of Health: Vila Redencao, Goiania, Goias, Brazil  
1991-1992 Diocesan Director of Pastoral Program for Children: Diocese of Goiania Office of Health, Vila Redencao, Goiania, Brazil  
1993-1998 Parish Ministry, Regional Treasurer: San Damiano, Hidrolandia, Brazil  
199-2000 Regional Secretary, Pastoral of the of the child  
2001-2003 Parish Ministry, Sale of Land Account  
2004-2007 Regional Treasurer: San Damiano, Goiânia, Brazil  
2008-2009 Pastoral Minister: Santa Cruz, Brazil  
2010 Pastoral Ministry: San Damiano, Brazil  
2011-2012 Secretarial Assistant: San Damiano, Brazil  
2012-2017 Community Service: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet

*Wake:* Wednesday, September 27, 2017, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
*Prayer Service:* Wednesday, September 27, 2017, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
*Mass of Christian Burial:* Wednesday, September 27, 2017, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
*Burial:* Thursday, September 28, 2017, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois  
*Interment:* Section 8, Lot 343, Grave 3, Resurrection Cemetery  
*Predeceased by:* By her parents, John E. Brouch and Louise B. (Brummel) Brouch and her brother, Charles Brouch and sister-in-law, Helen Brouch  
*Survived by:* Her brother, Richard, and her sisters Joan Cetto and Virginia Brouch, sister-in-law, Donna Brouch, Uncle Donald Brummel and several nieces and nephews

*Rest in Peace, Sister Grace!*