



Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

In the early hours of December 26, 2009, Sister Verna Furiel received the precious gift which her heart had long desired. Holding fast to the hope that she would “be celebrating Christmas in heaven,” her Advent waiting came to an end and her expectation was fulfilled with the vision of the Eternal Christmas. Enduring the pain and suffering of her final days with a sense of blessed assurance, Sister Verna was an exemplar of confidence in the presence of Emmanuel, God-with-Us. A Franciscan through and through, her parting gift of love to all those whom she treasured in life will be forever wrapped in the peace and joy of Christmas.

Born to Olga and Thomas Furiel on October 21, 1928, in Joliet, Illinois, Verna was welcomed as the fourth daughter of eight children. These included her brother, Louis Sedivy and her six sisters: Sister Pauline Ann, Sister Anne Marie, Olga, Theresa, Mary and the youngest, Rosalie, whose passing at 14 years of age remained a source of heartache for Verna and her entire family.

A creative, curious and faith-filled young girl, Verna never lost the twinkle in her eye or her sense of childlike wonder and awe. From an early age, she was a talented musician who took great pleasure in making music with and for others. Always ready to offer a joyful song to the Lord, Verna responded generously to God’s call to live the Gospel way of life. She entered the Joliet Franciscans as a postulant at the age of 15. In 1945, she became a novice and received the name Sister Thomas Ann. After graduating from the College of St. Francis in 1960 with a major in Biology, Sister Verna began her studies for a Master of Education Degree in Guidance and Counseling at DePaul University.

Eager from the very beginning of her religious life to teach her beloved “little ones,” Sister Verna taught first and second grade for 30 years in schools throughout Illinois and Ohio, spending ten years at Sacred Heart (Englewood). A devoted advocate for the children and families of the inner-city of Chicago, Sister Verna was greatly loved by her students, their parents and her colleagues.

Alleluia!



Sister Verna Furiel, OSF

In 1979, Sister Verna experienced a call to care for the spiritual needs of the sick and dying. She embarked on a new ministerial journey that required of her formal training for hospital chaplaincy. After completing her internship and residency at Rush-Presbyterian St. Luke’s Hospital in Chicago, she began her ministry as a chaplain at St. Mary of Nazareth Hospital on Chicago’s west side. In 1989, she returned to Joliet to minister at Provena-St. Joseph’s Hospital in Joliet. Then in 1999 Sister Verna was invited to consider a new ministerial opportunity for which she was uniquely qualified. Integrating the two great loves of her life, she became a pediatric chaplain for Hospice Services of Joliet, a ministry of great blessing that she continued until September, 2009, when her own experience of living with cancer led her to retire to Our Lady of Angels where she devoted herself to prayer and her final ministry of farewell blessings.

Remembered for her deep spirituality, kindness, gentle humor, and compassion, Sister Verna would often be heard saying: “Where would we be without community?” Always accentuating the positive, yet no stranger to the hardships of life, Sister Verna embraced her vocation to love as Jesus loved and to give freely of all that she received. Inspired by the writings of Thomas Merton, Sister Verna knew that “our real journey in life is interior: it is a matter of growth, deepening, and of an ever greater surrender to the creative action of love and grace in our hearts.” As Sister Verna now beholds the glory of God, let us join our voices with hers and those of all the Angel choirs who have led her into Paradise: Gloria! Gloria! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sister Verna Furiel, OSF
October 21, 1928 — December 26, 2009

Born: October 21, 1928
Parents: Thomas and Olga (Hermann) Furiel
Postulancy: September 5, 1944
Novitiate: August 12, 1945
First Profession: August 12, 1947
Final Profession: August 12, 1950
Entered New Life: December 26, 2009

Ministry History

1948-1953 Teacher: Grade 1, St. Clement, Chicago, Illinois
1953-1955 Teacher: Grade 1, St. Peter, Mansfield, Ohio
1955-1956 Teacher: Grades 1 & 2, St. John the Baptist, Payne, Ohio
1956-1957 Teacher: Grade 1, St. Peter, Mansfield
1957-1959 Teacher: Grade 1, St. Joseph, Elgin, Illinois
1959-1960 Teacher: Grades 1 & 2, St. John the Baptist, Payne
1960-1962 Superintendent, Principal and Teacher: Grades 1 & 5, St. Cecilia, Columbus, Ohio

1962-1963 Teacher: Grade 7, Holy Family, Cleveland, Ohio
1963-1964 Teacher: Biology, Science, Reading, Spelling, Marybrook Academy, Maumee, Ohio

1964-1969 Teacher: Grade 2, St. Matthew, Champaign, Illinois
1969-1979 Teacher; Grade 2, Sacred Heart, Chicago
1979-1980 Clinical/Pastoral Student: Rush/Presbyterian St. Luke Medical Center, Chicago
1980-1981 Student: Good Samaritan Hospital, Downers Grove, Illinois
1981-1986 Pastoral Minister: St. Mary of Nazareth Hospital, Chicago
1986-1987 Temporary Member: St. Clare House of Prayer, Kankakee, Illinois
1988-1999 Chaplain: St. Joseph Medical Center, Joliet
1999-2009 Chaplain: Joliet Area Community Hospice, Joliet

Wake: Tuesday, December 29, 2009, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Prayer Service: Tuesday, December 29, 2009, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Mass of Christian Burial: Tuesday, December 29, 2009, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Burial: Wednesday, December 30, 2009, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to SS. Cyril and Methodius Cemetery, Joliet, IL
Interment: SS. Cyril and Methodius Cemetery, Joliet, IL, #8
Predeceased by: Her parents, Thomas and Olga (Hermann) Furiel; her sisters, Theresa (Michael) Krutsch, Mary (Robert) Paul and Rosalie Furiel and her brother, Louis Sedivy.
Survived by: Her sisters, Sister Pauline Ann Furiel, OSF, Sister Anne Marie Furiel, OSF and Olga (Edward) Matesevic, nieces and nephews

Rest in Peace, Sister Verna