



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

More than 150 years ago, many families of German immigrants settled in an area of Columbus, Ohio, which is now called German Village. It was in this community of strong German roots and equally strong Catholic values that Rosemary Cecilia Kerscher was born on September 19, 1926, to her parents, Valentine and Martha (Schmidt) Kerscher. She was welcomed into her family by four older brothers (Charles, Erwin, Bernard, and Edward) and three older sisters (Rita, Dolores, and Virginia). Her birth evened out the number of boys and girls in the family – until three years later when her younger brother, Paul, arrived on the scene and made the boys the majority.

Rosemary was educated by the Joliet Franciscan Sisters at St. Mary Grade School and High School in Columbus. However, even before she entered the first grade she was familiar with the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate, for our deceased Sister Siena Schmidt was her aunt, her mother's sister.

After graduating from high school in June, 1944, Rosemary expressed a desire to enter the Franciscan Congregation in Joliet, Illinois – but her parents asked her to work a year or two before she followed her heart's desire. She honored her parents' wishes, worked in an office for two years, and on September 4, 1946, Rosemary, with the blessing of her parents, entered the postulancy of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate in Joliet. When she became a novice nearly a year later, she received the name of Sister Mary Sharon. She professed her temporary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience on August 12, 1949, and professed perpetual vows three years later.

Having grown up with eight siblings, Sharon was blessed with many nieces and nephews. She loved children, and with great enthusiasm and eagerness she embarked on a teaching career that would span forty years – always in grade one, and a few years with grades two and three added on. The last twenty years of teaching were at Corpus Christi School in Columbus. Many summers were spent with the Head Start Program in Joliet where she was devoted to giving underprivileged children a strong foundation in reading skills.

Sharon was known as a creative woman. A look into her tidy, organized classroom always found colorful alphabet decorations as well as delightful and attractive bulletin boards. She was often asked by the Sister in charge of the convent where she lived to make some special decorations for the holidays. Christmas often found the convent community room transformed into winter wonderlands that would challenge the creativity of Walt Disney. While teaching at St. Peter's Grade School in Mansfield, Ohio, she volunteered to help with designing and making costumes for the high school plays. Her creative energies were later channeled to baking. She baked and decorated cakes for every occasion – birthdays, jubilees, weddings, parties, and any special

# *Alleluia!*



*Sister Sharon Kerscher, OSF*

event. Anytime someone needed something special, Sharon was there to create it with great love and joy. Every Christmas season she baked hundreds of cookies of numerous varieties to give to her family, her friends, and even her doctors. Not even Martha Stewart or the bakers on the Food Channel could compete with her intricate, frosted designs that looked like they were painted.

In 1989 Sharon retired from teaching. For the next twelve years she worked as an office assistant and receptionist for a dentist, Dr. Peter Kakis. Her ability to organize and her attention to detail made her a valuable asset in a busy dental office. She loved going to work every day and meeting the patients, and Dr. Kakis felt blessed to have such a talented and dedicated assistant on whom he could depend.

Over her many years in Columbus, Sharon made countless friends. She loved going to gatherings of Sisters and Associates, to family parties, and to weekly card games with long-time friends. Recently she joined her high school classmates to celebrate their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of high school graduation. She enjoyed going out to eat for special occasions – or for no occasion at all. When Sharon celebrated her eighty-eighth birthday on September 19<sup>th</sup>, Sister Mary Berendt, who had lived with her for more than thirty years, called her to plan a dinner celebration at Sharon's favorite Mexican restaurant where, no doubt, a chimichanga would certainly be her entrée of choice. Two days later Sharon enjoyed a special birthday dinner with her sister, Virginia, her brother, Paul, and her sister-in-law, Jan. That would be the last time that the four would be together, for on Wednesday, September 24, Sharon was unexpectedly invited to another party, a surprise party, a heavenly feast! While family members, Sisters in community, Associates and friends struggled to deal with the shock of her sudden departure from this life, Sharon was enjoying a reunion beyond description. I wonder how long it took before her father or one of her brothers suggested a game of "Thirty-One"!

Sharon, we rejoice in your devoted Franciscan life of sixty-eight years, and we proclaim with gratitude and joy, "Alleluia, Alleluia!"

***Sister Sharon Kerscher***  
***September 19, 1926 — September 24, 2014***

*Born:* September 19, 1926  
*Parents:* Valentine Kerscher and Martha (Schmidt) Kerscher  
*Postulancy:* September 4, 1946  
*Novitiate:* August 12, 1947  
*First Profession:* August 12, 1949  
*Final Profession:* August 12, 1952  
*Entered New Life:* September 24, 2014

---

**Ministry History**

1949-1951 Teacher: Grades 1, 2; St. Peter, Mansfield, Ohio  
1952-1955 Teacher: Grades 1, 2, 3: St. John, Payne, Ohio  
1955-1960 Teacher: Grade 1, St. Raymond, Joliet, Illinois  
1960-1961 Teacher: Grade 1, St. Coleman, Pompano Beach, Florida  
1961-1965 Teacher: St. Peter, Mansfield  
1965-1969 Teacher: Grades 1, 2, Our Lady of Grace, Mansfield  
1969-1988 Teacher: Grade 1, Corpus Christi, Columbus, Ohio  
1988-1989 Sabbatical  
1989-2004 Office Assistant: Dr. Kakis Dental Office, Columbus  
2004-2014 Special Ministry

---

*Wake:* Tuesday, September 30, 2014, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
*Prayer Service:* Tuesday, September 30, 2014, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
*Mass of Christian Burial:* Tuesday, September 30, 2014, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
*Burial:* Wednesday, October 1, 2014, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois  
*Interment:* Section 8, Lot 361, Grave 8, Resurrection Cemetery  
*Predeceased by:* Her parents, Valentine Kerscher and Martha (Schmidt) Kerscher; her brothers Bernard, Edward, Charles and Ervin and her sisters, Rita and Dolores.  
*Survived by:* Her sister, Virginia Kerscher and brother, Paul (Jan) Kerscher and many nieces and nephews, including Sister Elaine Kerscher, OSF, a Joliet Franciscan.

***Rest in Peace, Sister Sharon***