

# Alleluia!

## *Sister Frances Osterhaus, OSF*

Sister Frances Osterhaus was born in Green Creek, Illinois on February 13, 1918, and was baptized at St. Mary Help of Christians Church, being given the name Frances Christine. Her parents, Henry and Catherine (Niebrugge) Osterhaus, were devout and dedicated Catholics and were very active in the parish community. Frances had two sisters, Anna and Cecilia, and one brother, John, all of whom have preceded her in death. Frances attended Green Creek Elementary School before she came to our prep in Joliet, Illinois.

On September 6, 1937, Frances entered the congregation as a postulant. At her novitiate entrance in 1938, Frances received the name Sister Benitia, the name by which most of her students remember her. Her temporary profession followed in 1940 and her final profession in 1943.

Sister Frances went on to study receiving her B.A. degree Summa Cum Laude from the College of St. Francis, her M.A. in Biology from St. Bonaventure University, and many additional courses and workshops from various universities. As a teacher in high school and on the college level, Sister Benitia was known to many science students for the research work she did tramping through muddy fields or streams or writing educational articles for various journals. An example of some of these scholarly articles was "Adaptive Modifications in the Leg Structures of Some North American Warblers," written for the Illinois State Academy of Science. Sister Benitia also shared this material in a lecture at Quincy College. The topic of her dissertation was "Adaptive Radiation in Parulid Warblers." Sister Benitia (Frances) was also a member of the Delta Epsilon Sigma Society and engaged in many of their activities and scientific projects. Her articles also appeared in the International Ornithological Congress Bulletin while she was teaching at the College of St. Francis.

After fourteen years teaching in high school and twelve years teaching at the college level, Sister Frances began another ministry which she deeply loved and to which she was very dedicated. Sister Frances went to St. Clare House of Prayer as a founding member in 1969 and remained there until 1980. She was a vital, involved member praying for the needs of the congregation and the world, helping the poor who came to their door, and being present to the other members of



this local community. Those who speak of Sister Frances mention her respectful, charitable demeanor and her love and support of the congregation and all God's people. While Sister Frances enjoyed the spiritual benefits and practices at St. Clare's, she also loved the domestic part of the ministry. She liked to make life more pleasant and more special for those with whom and for whom she served.

Being asked to be the Director of Affiliates in 1980, Sister Frances left the House of Prayer and came to live at the Motherhouse. In addition to touching the lives of those who were beginning the formation process with our congregation, Sister Frances also worked in community service at the Motherhouse, served as the leader for a contemplative prayer group, was a volunteer at the Will-Grundy Medical Clinic and tutored in a local literacy program. Once again, she helped in any/every way that she could bringing her friendliness and smile to all the lives she touched.

When her health required that she retire to Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, she became a volunteer in its craft program, doing a lot of sewing for our sisters. Her help was much appreciated. Throughout her years at OLA, Sister Frances, with her smile and her gentle spirit, continued to bring joy into the lives of all who cared for her. Even as her health declined and she became weaker, Sister Frances remained a beacon of light and joy to each of us.

Sister Frances, we will miss you and we pray for your classmates, Sisters Anne Flaska, Irene Wlodarski, and Marie Grunloh; for your nieces in community, Sisters Helen and Rita Vahling; for all your family and friends who will keep your memory alive by sharing stories and memories of you. We pray that you may enjoy the gentle peace of living in God's kingdom. We pray that you and all the sisters who have gone before will rest in love forever and ever. Amen.

## *Sister Frances Osterhaus, OSF*

*February 13, 1918 — March 15, 2006*

<i>Born:</i>	February 13, 1918, Green Creek, IL
<i>Parents:</i>	Henry F. Osterhaus and Catherine (Niebrugge) Osterhaus
<i>Postulancy:</i>	September 6, 1937
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 12, 1938
<i>First Profession:</i>	August 12, 1940
<i>Final Profession:</i>	August 12, 1943
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	March 15, 2006

### **Ministry History**

1940-1943	Student: College of St. Francis
1943-1944	Teacher; History, Chemistry, Physics: St. Francis de Sales, Chicago, IL
1944-1947	Teacher; Chemistry, Algebra, Physiology, Religion: Sacred Heart Englewood, Chicago, IL
1947-1950	Teacher; Algebra, Biology, Chemistry, Religion: St. Mary, Columbus, OH
1950-1952	Teacher; Algebra, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, Religion: Sacred Heart Englewood, Chicago, IL
1952-1957	Teacher; Biology, Chemistry, Religion: SS. Peter and Paul, Chicago, IL
1957-1969	Instructor; Biology Department: College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL
1969-1980	Core Member: St. Clare House of Prayer, Kankakee, IL
1980-1981	Director of Affiliates: Motherhouse. Joliet, IL
1981-1982	Director of Affiliates, Parish census taker, Teacher: Motherhouse, St. Mary Magdalene, College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL
1983-1986	Pastoral Minister: St. Mary Magdalene, Joliet, IL
1986-1989	Secretary: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL
1990-1991	Seamstress: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL
1991-1994	Tutor, Literacy Program Volunteer: Motherhouse, Will/Grundy County Medical Clinic, Joliet, IL
1994-1999	Community Service, Centering Prayer Group: Motherhouse, Joliet, IL
1999-2006	Retired/Special Ministry

<i>Wake:</i>	Friday, March 17, 2006, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Fred C. Dames Funeral Home, Joliet
<i>Wake Service:</i>	Friday, March 17, 2006, 4:45 p.m., Fred C. Dames Funeral Home, Joliet
<i>Mass of Christian Burial</i>	Friday, March 17, 2006, 7:00 p.m., St. John the Baptist Church, Joliet
<i>Burial</i>	Saturday, March 18, 2006, Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL
<i>Interment:</i>	S8-L5-G2 Resurrection Cemetery
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	Her parents Henry F. Osterhaus and Catherine (Niebrugge) Osterhaus; her sisters, Anna (Ferd) Vahling and Cecilia (Harry) Sandschafer; her brother, John Osterhaus
<i>Survived by:</i>	Nieces and nephews, including Sisters Helen and Rita Vahling

*Rest in Peace, Sister Frances*