

Sister Mary Catherine Rowan, O.S.F. (Fidelis) 771



Born: November 2, 1920
Parents: John N. and Mary (O'Brien) Rowan
Entered from: St. Sabina, Chicago, IL
Postulancy: September 8, 1942
Novitiate: August 12, 1943
Profession: August 12, 1945

Died: Tuesday, October 13, 1998 at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home
at 6:10 p.m.

Ministry:

1945 - 1946 Our Lady of Mercy, Granville, OH, Teacher and Prefect
1946 - 1947 St. Mary, Des Plaines, IL, Grade 3
1947 - 1950 Cathedral of St. Raymond, Joliet, IL, Grade 2
1950 - 1954 Immaculate Conception, Toledo, OH, Grade 2
1954 - 1955 Most Pure Heart of Mary, Shelby, OH, Grade 2
1955 - 1956 St. Mary Magdalene, Columbus, OH, Grades 1, 2
1956 - 1957 Immaculate Conception, Columbus, OH, Grade 1
1957 - 1959 Immaculate Conception, Toledo, OH, Grade 2
1959 - 1960 St. Ann, Lansing, IL, Grade 2
1960 - 1962 Immaculate Conception, Toledo, OH, Grade 2
1962 - 1967 St. Jude, Joliet, IL, Grade 1
1967 - 1969 St. Clement, Chicago, IL, Grades 1 and 2
1969 - 1974 St. Pascal, Chicago, IL, Grade 1
1974 - 1976 St. Ann, Lansing, IL, Grade 1
1976 - 1982 Our Lady of Loreto, Hometown, IL, Grade 1
1982 - 1987 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, residence, Substitute Teacher at
Catholic elementary schools
1987 - 1998 Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL, Retired

Wake: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL Friday, October 16, 1998
2-7 p.m. with prayer service at 4:30 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL
Friday, October 16, 1998 at 7:00 p.m.

Burial: Saturday, October 17, 1998 leaving Our Lady of Angels at
9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL,
S8-L337-G2

Survived by: her sister Sister Mary Geraldine Rowan, O.S.F. (Phoenix, AZ),
her brother Robert (Viola) Rowan (Evergreen Park, IL and
sisters-in-law Betty Rowan (Osage Beach, MO and
Mary Rita Rowan (Hometown, IL)

*For those who have been faithful, O Lord,
life is not ended, but merely changed.*

Sister Mary Catherine Rowan was born in Chicago Illinois on November 2, 1920 to John and Mary Ann O'Brien Rowan. She was baptized Catherine Ruby at St. Leo's Church in Chicago. Together with her brothers John, Robert and James, and her sister, Geraldine, Catherine learned the values of honesty, faith and diligence from their parents. The children attended grammar school at Sacred Heart Englewood. After completing her classes at Sacred Heart Commercial School Catherine worked as a secretary. When Catherine decided to seek membership with the Franciscan Congregation in Joliet, her employer wrote to Mother Thomasine regarding Catherine "...I have found her to be honest, sincere and dependable. Her record with us has in all ways been excellent." The priest from St. Sabina's her home parish and from Sacred Heart Parish also highly recommended her "as an exemplary Catholic, a leader with the girl scouts, as industrious and pious." On September 8, 1942, Catherine became a postulant with the Joliet Franciscan Sisters. Her sister Geraldine, then Sister Rosilda, was already a member of the same congregation.

On August 12, 1943 Catherine was received into the novitiate and given a new name, Sister Mary Fidelis. Following her first profession, Sister Fidelis began her ministry as a primary teacher, educating children in Granville, Toledo and Columbus, Ohio and Des Plaines, Joliet, Chicago, Lansing and Hometown, Illinois. Sister Mary Catherine continued in this ministry for almost 40 years. It was a real joy for her to prepare children for their First Communion.

Sister Mary Catherine was always appreciative of all that the Congregation did for her. She expressed that appreciation in some of her correspondence with various members of the administration. She loved to come to Joliet to spend time with the sisters as she completed her education at the College of St. Francis. The nickname of "Fiddles" was given to her in her playful association with the sisters.

As an avid letter writer, Sister Mary Catherine kept up an active correspondence with her family, former pupils and other friends. Even as a young Sister, Mary Catherine dealt with much illness and many surgeries. In 1987, Sister Mary Catherine moved to Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home. Though her health was not strong, she loved to spend time helping to prepare and wrap gifts for the Sisters at OLA. She had a unique artistic touch which put that special touch on each of the wrapped gifts. She also helped with various other tasks as much as she was able. She spent much time in prayer and in inspirational reading. When Sisters stopped in to visit, she was always gracious. In her later days when she found it difficult to communicate, Mary Catherine had a way of letting you know she was grateful for your visit.

As her condition grew weaker, the Sisters continued to pray and keep vigil. A small group had gathered by her bedside, following the evening meal on Tuesday, October 13, 1998. Quietly and peacefully Mary Catherine drew her last breath and commended her soul to God to whom she had given her life.

Sister Mary Catherine, we thank you for the gift of your life amongst us. We ask you to pray for us your Franciscan Sisters, family, pupils and friends, that we may live our lives in generous service for God's people. May you know the joy of God's presence forever. Amen. Alleluia.

