



Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

As we approach the Feast of Christ the King and the end of the Church's liturgical year, our Sister Tecla quietly made her way to the King's Court and the end of her earthly life. It was shortly before midnight on November 15, while the nurse stepped out to get some medication, that Sister Tecla responded to the divine invitation with her song: "*Alaboré a Mi Señor*" (Praise to my Lord!).

Sister Tecla was born in Mansfield, Ohio, on March 21, 1923, to the late Anna Santos and Lester J. Snyder, and baptized Thekla Adilla Snyder, at St. Peter's Church. She was the third of five children: her brother Frederick, sisters Florence and Lucille (all deceased) and her sister Elizabeth who resides in Mansfield, Ohio. After attending Hedges Grade School and Mansfield Senior High School, Tecla, inspired and encouraged by the Joliet Franciscans teaching at St. Peter's, entered the postulancy of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate on September 4, 1940. Tecla completed her senior year in high school and graduated from St. Francis Academy in 1941. Entering the novitiate in August of 1941, Tecla was given the name Sister Mary Cephas. Two years later she made her first profession, and in 1946 pronounced her final vows to which she has been faithful for these past 70 years.

While she was a postulant, Tecla was allowed to go home to Mansfield during her mother's illness and again when her mother died, something Tecla would always remember gratefully. And it may have been her mother, Anna Santos, who gave Tecla her love for the Spanish language and culture. Majoring in Spanish at the then College of St. Francis, she subsequently received her Master's degree from the University of Notre Dame. Tecla also studied in Madrid, Spain, as well as Guadalajara, Mexico. Her love for Spanish culture and her own prayer life led her to study the great Spanish mystics, John of the Cross and Theresa of Avila. Sister Tecla's love of learning included a deepening of her spiritual life. This took her to Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, for a year of theological studies ranging from Old and New Testaments, the Church and Social Justice and perhaps her greatest love, liturgy and spirituality. Summers found her studying at universities in California, Arizona and Colorado.

Sister Tecla began her ministry of teaching in 1945 at SS. Peter and Paul in Chicago. In 1951 she returned to Joliet, and along with teaching at St. Francis Academy, she was Assistant Mistress of the aspirants at St. Francis Preparatory. She endeared herself to many young high school girls who were aspiring to become Joliet Franciscans. In 1957 Tecla returned to her beloved Ohio to teach at Central Catholic High School in Toledo.

Alleluia!



Sister Tecla Snyder, OSF

A new chapter began in her life when, in 1959, Sister Tecla again returned to Joliet to teach Spanish at the College of St. Francis. Tecla gained the respect and love of both her students and colleagues at CSF. Notably her participation in the summer grant program from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1976 and her nomination and selection to serve a six year term in the Danforth Associate Program in 1978 were evidence of her professional expertise. In the curriculum vitae required in the Danforth nomination Sister Tecla wrote: "My concern is not only to teach students intellectually, but to help to educate each one as a whole person, intellectually, morally, socially and physically."

We can only guess the pain she experienced when foreign languages were no longer required of every student at the college. Her beloved Spanish, although still intact as a major, was no longer viable. In 1985, she gracefully asked for early retirement at the end of the school year, 1986. In her retirement letter she wrote: "I have permission from our Congregation to study and prepare this coming year for my second career. I am most grateful for my Congregation's support and encouragement. Changes are not easy, but they are necessary. (We were 'never promised a rose garden.')

So Sister Tecla began again, this time teaching in her hometown of Mansfield, Ohio, at St. Peter's High School for one year and then becoming a student herself at Gonzaga University in Spokane in 1987-88. Her teaching days were not over as she again returned to Joliet and Joliet Catholic Academy where she taught until 1996.

Family ministry with her sister Lucille took Sister Tecla to San Jose, California, where she cared for Lu until her death in 2006. Sister Tecla continued serving the Congregation she so loved in a variety of ways at the Motherhouse, Guardian Angel Home, and since 2008, at Our Lady of Angels.

There is little doubt that the angels were singing with Sister Tecla as she entered the heavenly court. How appropriate that we join them in thanking our God for this joy-filled, loving woman whom so many affectionately called "Tecky."

Sister Tecla Snyder, OSF
March 21, 1923 — November 15, 2013

Born: March 21, 1923
Parents: Lester J. Snyder and Anna (Santos) Snyder
Postulancy: September 4, 1940
Novitiate: August 12, 1941
First Profession: August 12, 1943
Final Profession: August 12, 1946
Entered New Life: November 15, 2013

Ministry History

1943—1945 Student: College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois
1945—1951 Teacher: Homeroom, Religion, English, Spanish, SS. Peter and Paul, Chicago, Illinois
1951—1957 Assistant Mistress, Teacher: Spanish, Religion, St. Francis Preparatory Academy, Joliet
1957—1959 Teacher: Spanish, Central Catholic High School, Toledo, Ohio
1959—1962 Teacher, Club Moderator: Spanish, College of St. Francis, Joliet
1962—1986 Teacher: Spanish, College of St. Francis, Joliet
1986—1987 Teacher: Spanish, St. Peter High School, Mansfield, Ohio
1987—1988 Student: Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington
1988—1996 Teacher: Spanish, Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet
1996—2002 Family Ministry: San José, California
2002—2003 Receptionist, Community Service: Motherhouse, Joliet
2003—2005 Community Service: Guardian Angel Home, Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Community Office (801 Larkin), Joliet
2005—2008 Community Service: Guardian Angel Home, Joliet
2008—2013 Community Service: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home

Wake: Friday, November 22, 2013, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Prayer Service: Friday, November 22, 2013, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Mass of Christian Burial: Friday, November 22, 2013, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Burial: Saturday, November 23, 2013, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
Interment: Section 8, Lot 362, Grave 7, Resurrection Cemetery
Predeceased by: Her parents, Lester J. Snyder and Anna (Santos) Snyder, her brother, Frederick, and sisters: Florence Baum and Lucille Snyder
Survived by: Her sister, Elizabeth Osmond of Mansfield, Ohio.

Rest in Peace, Sister Tecla