



Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

Early Sunday morning on May 8, while the rest of the community of Sisters living at OLA were still sleeping, Talia, an aide devoted to Sister Karla Zdenek, made the last of her visits to see how Sister was doing. After telling her how much she loved her and that her friends would miss her very much, Talia told Sister Karla it was time to join her family in heaven. Karla took her last breath and left this world.

Born on Saturday, December 14, 1929, Mary Virginia Zdenek was welcomed into the world by her loving parents, Frank and Marie. The elder of two daughters, "Mary V." took naturally to the role of big sister. Devoted to her younger sister Dorothy, she learned the importance of being family from an early age. Raised in a faith-filled Czech home, Mary V. grew up on the west side of Cleveland in Saint Procop Parish. It was there that she first came to know and love the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate. Inspired by the example of her high school teachers: Sisters Protase, Clemens, Philomena and Celeste, Mary V. was moved by their example and felt a deep desire to give her life to God.

On September 13, 1947, Mary V. became a postulant and began her undergraduate studies at the College of St. Francis. The following August, she was received into the Novitiate and received her religious name, Sister Mary Karla. Two years later, on August 12, 1950, she professed her first vows in the company of her 23 classmates. Within a matter of days she was assigned to teach third grade in Chicago. For the next thirty-three years, she dedicated herself to the education of hundreds of middle-grade students in Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin. With each year that passed, Sr. Karla added to her repertoire of hilarious and touching classroom anecdotes.

In the summer of 1983, Sr. Karla returned to the Joliet area to assist with secretarial services at the Motherhouse. Before long, she also became one of the treasured receptionists and a designated motorist for any Sister who was in need of transportation services. In addition to serving the community, Sr. Karla also became actively involved with the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program sponsored by Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Joliet. Over a span of sixteen years, she provided more than 15,000 hours of volunteer service to enhance the quality of life for people who needed assistance with transportation

Alleluia!



Sister M. Karla Zdenek, OSF

in order to continue living independently. With a smile, a hearty laugh, a generous disposition and a tank of gas, Sr. Karla made an incredible difference in the lives of many grateful beneficiaries of her kindness and concern.

In May of 2000, Sr. Karla was among the Sisters who sadly, but generously, entrusted their beloved Motherhouse to the University of St. Francis and moved to their new residence at Guardian Angel Home. Resilient and ready for a new adventure in life, Sr. Karla continued to contribute in whatever way she could to assisting others in need.

As the years went on, Sr. Karla found ways of keeping up connections with those she loved. Among those receiving special affection and concern were the sisters in Brazil, especially the Brazilian sisters whom she had welcomed over the years with a heart full of hospitality during their months of English study and community life in Joliet.

Celebrating her 60th Jubilee in June of 2010, Sr. Karla recalled her many experiences of mission and ministry, highlighting the ways in which her own experience of vocation had been shaped by her awareness of the needs and sufferings of others, especially the vulnerable, the mentally disabled, the imprisoned and the seriously ill. In the years that followed, she began to feel the limits that came with her own aging process. Taking delight in fond memories of her days of skating, bike-riding and other adventurous activities, she reconciled herself to the reality of growing older, wiser and interdependent. Making the move to Our Lady of Angels, Sr. Karla welcomed opportunities for prayer and discovered God's grace in expected and unexpected ways. Now, she continues to watch over her beloved family, classmates and community as she celebrates with her triumphant Lord in the heavenly kingdom. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Sister M. Karla Zdenek, OSF

December 14, 1929 — May 8, 2016

<i>Born:</i>	December 14, 1929
<i>Parents:</i>	Frank Zdenek and Marie (Dusek) Zdenek
<i>Postulancy:</i>	September 13, 1947
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 12, 1948
<i>First Profession:</i>	August 12, 1950
<i>Final Profession:</i>	August 13, 1953
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	May 8, 2016

Ministry History

1950-1951	Teacher: Grade 3, St. Clement, Chicago, Illinois
1951	Teacher: Grade 3, St. Francis of Assisi, Chicago
1951-1954	Teacher: Grades 3, 4, SS. Cyril and Methodius, Chicago
1954-1958	Teacher: Grades 3, 4, Holy Family, Cleveland, Ohio
1958-1961	Teacher: Grades 4, 5, St. Mary Magdalene, Columbus, Ohio
1961-1962	Teacher: Grades 5, 6, Annunciation, Aurora, Illinois
1962-1965	Teacher: Grades 5, 6, 7, St. Mary, Des Plaines, Illinois
1965-1966	Teacher: Grades 5, 6, Our Lady of Grace, Muskegon, Michigan
1966-1967	Teacher: Grades 5, 6, Holy Family, Bayfield, Wisconsin
1967-1975	Teacher: Grades 5, 6, St. Peter, Mansfield, Ohio
1975-1976	Clerical Work: Catholic Charities, Mansfield
1976-1977	Secretary: Catholic Social Services, Mansfield
1977-1978	Substitute Teacher –Cognitive Disabilities: Grade 5, St. Edward, Mansfield
1978-1982	Teacher: Grade 5, St. Edward, Ashland, Ohio
1982-1983	Parish Minister/Substitute Teacher: St. Edward, Ashland
1983-1987	Typist/Clerical Worker: Motherhouse, Joliet, Illinois
1987-1988	Driver/Receptionist/Clerical Worker: Motherhouse, Joliet
1988-2003	Driver/Receptionist: Motherhouse, Joliet
2003-2016	Community Service

<i>Wake:</i>	Thursday, May 12, 2016, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Prayer Service:</i>	Thursday, May 12, 2016, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Mass of Christian Burial:</i>	Thursday, May 12, 2016, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Burial:</i>	Friday, May 13, 2016, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
<i>Interment:</i>	Section 8, Lot 360, Grave 7, Resurrection Cemetery
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	By her parents, Frank Zdenek and Marie (Dusek) Zdenek
<i>Survived by:</i>	Her sister, Dorothy Wochele, and nieces and nephews

Rest in Peace, Sister Karla!