

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

April 23, 1983

Dear Sisters,

April 22, 1983 was Alleluia Day for Sister Irene Fitzgibbons. Her sister, Sister Miriam Rose, designated it that as she talked to Sister Irene during her last hours here on earth, encouraging her to anticipate a joyful reunion with all her family members already in Heaven. At 12:01 p.m. Sister Irene very quietly passed from this world to the next, opening her eyes shortly before death to say good-bye to her two sisters, Sister Miriam Rose and Grace, then leaving for eternity.

Although Sister Irene was young, by modern standards, at the time of her death, she had lived a full, rich life. During her 45 years in religious life she taught every grade except first, and served as principal in three Congregation elementary schools. She was always kind and considerate with students and staff, stimulating all to be creative in their approach to learning or teaching. She realized that her mission in life was fulfilled through the ministry of education, but she had a great love for everyone. In 1971 she wrote, "For most of us the classroom is our apostolate, yet we must not forget the poor, the sick, nor the old...Sisters willing to be involved in parish work is so essential today. For each Sister in her own way can witness to Christ." The Sisters who lived with Sister Irene over the years attest to the fact that she was the living example of her own words. Her congeniality and happy disposition endeared her to others and explain the joy her presence brought to all who were privileged to know her.

When Sister Irene, due to ill health, had to retire to OLA in 1981, she suffered from the thought of forced retirement. Yet her presence brought great joy to the residents of OLA. Many Sisters remarked at her ever-present cheerfulness. She loved to play cards, to read, and enjoyed TV, particularly in recent weeks when it was difficult for her to hold a book. She never complained of her pain, even though it grew in intensity, confining her to a wheelchair or bed these past few months.

She was one of the older members of a large family--11 children in all. At an early age she learned the responsibility of caring for her many younger brothers and sisters. At this time we offer our deepest sympathy to her six surviving sisters and two brothers, her many nieces and nephews, and all her relatives and friends. She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her during life. But this gentle woman has been called home. She passed through her Good Friday of suffering and now is ready for the joy and glory of her own Resurrection Day. May we each sing with her our Alleluias and rejoice as we celebrate her earthly life and her passage into eternity.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

THE GOVERNING BOARD



SISTER M. IRENE FITZGIBBONS, OSF (DOROTHY) 572

**Parents:** John F. and Rose Kopitz Anderson Fitzgibbons  
**Born:** August 24, 1919, in Chicago, IL

**Postulancy:** September 8, 1936  
**Novitiate:** August 12, 1937  
**First Prof.:** August 12, 1939  
**Final Prof.:** August 12, 1942  
**Silver Jubilee:** June, 1964



**Age:** 63 years old; in religious life 45 years

**Ministry:** 41 years in elementary education; teacher, principal

1939-40	St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Student at College of St. Francis
1940-41	St. Raymond, Joliet, IL, Grade 3
1941-43	St. Peter, Mansfield, OH, Grade 2
1943-53	Immaculate Conception, Toledo, OH, Grades 3, 5, 6
1953-55	St. Mary, Des Plaines, IL, Grade 7
1955-57	St. Edward, Ashland, OH, Grades 4, 5, 6
1957-63	Immaculate Conception, Toledo, OH, Superior, Principal, Grade 8
1963-69	St. Andrew, Romeoville, IL, Superior, Principal, Grade 7
1969-74	St. Rita of Cascia, Aurora, IL, Superior, Principal
1974-81	Divine Savior, Norridge, IL, Grades 5, 6
1981-83	Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL, convalescing

**Died:** Friday, April 22, 1983, at 12:01 p.m. at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet

**Wake:** Sunday, April 24, 2 to 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Angels

**Prayer Service:** Sunday, April 24, 3:30 p.m.

**Mass:** Sunday, April 24, 7 p.m.

**Burial:** Monday, April 25, 9:00 a.m. from Our Lady of Angels to Resurrection Cemetery, Lockport