

**SISTER MIRIAM ROSE FITZGIBBONS O.S.F. (Beatrice) 688**

**Born:** September 20, 1925 in Chicago, IL  
**Parents:** John F. and Rose (Kopitz) Fitzgibbons  
**Postulancy:** September 4, 1940  
**Novitiate:** August 12, 1941  
**First Profession:** August 12, 1943  
**Final Profession:** August 12, 1947  
**Died:** Sunday, July 14, 1991 at 9:15 a.m.  
at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet



**Ministry:**

1943 - 1944 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Student at CSF  
1944 - 1950 Sacred Heart, Hubbard Woods, IL, Grade 3  
1950 - 1951 St. Ann, Lansing, IL, Grade 3  
1951 - 1954 St. John, Joliet, IL, Grades 4, 5, 6 & 7  
1954 - 1956 Immaculate Conception, Columbus, OH, Grade 5  
1956 - 1959 St. Clement, Chicago, IL, Grades 5 & 7  
1959 - 1962 St. Francis de Sales, Chicago, IL, Grades 7 & 8,  
Grade School Principal  
1962 - 1963 Corpus Christi, Columbus, OH, Grade 7  
1963 - 1965 St. Peter, Mansfield, OH, Grade 8  
1965 - 1966 St. Procop, Cleveland, OH, Grade 8, Superior and Principal  
1966 - 1967 Corpus Christi, Columbus, OH, Superior & Principal  
1967 - 1969 St. Andrew, Romeoville, IL, Grades 7 & 8  
1969 - 1971 Our Lady of Grace, Muskegon, MI, Grades 7 & 8 and Principal  
1971 - 1973 St. Rita of Cascia, Aurora, IL, Teaching  
1973 - 1974 St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO, Student  
1974 - 1975 St. Irene Parish, Warrenville, IL, Religious  
Education Coordinator  
1975 - 1978 Christ the King Parish, Lombard, IL, Religious  
Education Coordinator  
1978 - 1979 St. Mary Parish, Sycamore, IL, Religious Education  
Coordinator  
1979 - 1982 St. Ludmilla, Chicago, IL, Teaching & Religious  
Education Coordinator  
1982 - 1991 St. Ambrose Parish, Crest Hill, IL, Religious  
Education Coordinator

**Wake:** Wednesday, July 17, 1991 from 2:00 - 7:00 p.m.  
Prayer Service at 4:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Angels, Joliet

**Mass of Christian Burial:** Wednesday, July 17, 1991 at 7 p.m.

**Burial:** Thursday, July 18, 1991 at 10:00 a.m.  
Interment Resurrection Cemetery

**Survived by sisters:** Delores Carroll, Eileen Legorreta, Grace Goerg,  
Joan Stawski, Lucille Uelman and brothers:  
Gene Fitzgibbons and Walter Fitzgibbons

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

On Sunday morning, July 14, 1991, at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, our Sister Miriam Rose Fitzgibbons was born to life eternal.

She who was always full of surprises, surprised us by her sudden death. She had spent a week at Our Lady of Angels, recuperating from an inner-ear infection. She realized she had phlebitis, but wasn't too concerned about any danger of a traveling blood clot.

Sunday morning she was present for the celebration of Eucharist, and ate breakfast in the dining room. She returned to her bedroom chatting with all she met on the way. Sister Lorraine Young visited her, and they decided to pray the rosary. Just that suddenly, sitting in her chair, not making any sound, she died. At that moment, she who so often greeted others with "ALLELUIA," experienced her ALLELUIA!

Beatrice was born September 20, 1925 to Rose and John Fitzgibbons. There were eight girls and three boys in the large family. Four of them are now deceased. We can imagine what life must have been like for this family growing up on the south side of Chicago. Sister Miriam Rose loved her Irish heritage, and delighted in telling of her travel adventures in Ireland. The family was always proud of the two girls who became Joliet Franciscans. Sister Miriam Rose shared community with her sister, Sister Irene, and was with her at her bedside when she died in 1983. Although she was very young when she left home, Sister Miriam Rose remained close to her family. Her family speaks of the positive influence and inspiration she has been to them. They will miss her.

Beatrice entered the Congregation in 1940 when she was fifteen years old. She always considered her vocation a gift, and embraced religious life with the wholeheartedness so characteristic of who she was. She wrote, "I AM a Joliet Franciscan! It is not what I do for the Congregation, but who I myself am as a person. Jesus is the center of my life, and it is exciting to help make Him come alive in other lives too. My whole day is immersed in spiritual happenings."

She was always eager to deepen her understanding of her Franciscan vocation. She was the first of our Sisters to request to participate in a new Franciscan Institute that will begin next week. On her request form she wrote, "I love to grow in my knowledge and understanding of St. Francis...PAX ET BONUM."

She loved her Sisters in community. She was close to her classmates, and knew how to be a faithful friend. She accepted people for who they were, looked for the positive in them, and had a way of making people feel special.



She generously shared her many talents with her Sisters in community. Through the years she offered teaching workshops and enrichment programs. Just a few years ago she offered a workshop called W O W "Women of Wonder...a creative approach to put more life in our prayers, and prayer in our life." Some of our Sisters still have the small stone with the word WONDER that she gave them as a reminder of the message of the workshop.

Less than a month ago she volunteered to be with our Sisters at Our Lady of Angels. She visited, took them for walks, assisted them at meal time. Somehow she had a way of adding joy and laughter when she was present. She did make a difference!

Each moment of life was precious to her. She experienced suffering in her life. Two bouts with cancer left her with physical limitations, but never dampened her spirits. She knew how to be fully alive to the present moment.

Sister Miriam Rose was truly an educator. She began her teaching career when she was only nineteen years old, spending thirty-one years as a classroom teacher (serving as teacher-principal for seven of those years.) Her classroom was alive with excitement. Her talent for unique illustrations and her ability to tell a story fascinated her students and enabled them to enjoy learning.

In 1974 she began a new education ministry, specializing in religious education. She wrote of this ministry: "I am a faith animator and a dream keeper. I believe with Pope John XXIII that we are meant to be sparks of light and leaven for our world."

For the last eight years she has ministered as Religious Education Coordinator for St. Ambrose Parish, Crest Hill, Illinois. How significant it was that St. Ambrose Parish selected Sister Miriam Rose as its Woman of the Year for 1991. They wrote of her, "She is a fine example of a kind and loving Christian, not only to the children of the parish, but to the adults as well." What a wonderful, and well deserved tribute!

Perhaps the spirit of Sister Miriam Rose is best reflected in these words we found written on an envelope at her bedside.

"Everyone is unique. We each develop at a different pace. I want to help EXPLODE JESUS in the lives of children. I want their eyes, ears, hearts and lives to be touched daily with His love. My challenge is to help them color their lives daily with His love and goodness."

Sister Miriam Rose, we thank you for your fifty years as our Sister. We will miss your presence. You have colored our lives with your own exuberance for life, your sense of wonder and celebration. (We can't help but imagine that heaven now has a few new decorations with your lively illustrations.) May you live the joy of eternal WONDER forever and ever. Amen! Alleluia!