

SISTER MARY L. LUKAS, O.S.F. (Lourdette) 673

Born: February 6, 1922 in Vlċnov, Czechoslovakia
Parents: Frank and Filomena (Kuzela) Lukas
Postulancy: September 5, 1939
Novitiate: August 12, 1940
First Profession: August 12, 1942
Final Profession: August 12, 1945
Died: Tuesday, August 7, 1990 at 11:25 p.m.
St. Mary Hospital, Kankakee, Illinois



Ministry:

1942 - 1943 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Student at CSF
1943 - 1952 St. Procopius High School, Chicago, IL, English, Religion,
Latin, General Science, History
1952 - 1953 St. Peter High School, Mansfield, OH, Religion, English,
Journalism
1953 - 1957 Sacred Heart High School, Englewood, IL, Religion, English,
History, Physical Education
1957 - 1959 St. Procop High School, Cleveland, OH, Religion, English,
Journalism, Civics
1959 - 1960 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, English
1960 - 1962 St. Procopius High School, Chicago, IL, Superior and Principal
English
1962 - 1963 ✓ St. Francis Preparatory, Aspirant Mistress and Teaching
English at St. Francis Academy
1963 - 1966 SS. Peter and Paul High School, Chicago, IL, Superior and
Principal, English and Language Arts
1966 - 1968 St. Thomas Aquinas, Louisville, OH, English, Guidance
1968 - 1975 St. Procopius High School, Chicago, IL, Principal
1975 - 1976 Cardinal Gibbons High School, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Religion
1976 - 1977 Providence High School, New Lenox, IL, English
1977 - 1981 St. Clare House of Prayer, Kankakee, IL, Core Member
1981 - 1982 St. Joseph, Elgin, IL, Pastoral Ministry
1982 - 1985 St. John the Evangelist, Loveland, CO, Pastoral Ministry
1985 - 1990 St. Clare House of Prayer, Kankakee, IL, Core Member

Wake: Friday, August 10, 1990 from 2:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Prayer service at 4:30 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial: Friday, August 10, 1990 at 7 p.m.

Burial: Saturday, August 11, 1990 Resurrection Cemetery at 10:30 a.m.

Survived by brother, Frank and sisters, Rose Nechvatal and Georgiann Kutilek

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

Sister Mary (Lourdette) Lukas was in Canada, on a Carmelite Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines, when she collapsed. On July 18, 1990 she suffered a stroke which left her weak and unable to speak or eat. Our Sister Miriam Jo Eckelkamp, her faithful friend and companion on the pilgrimage, remained with her at the hospital in Canada until she was able to fly by air ambulance to St. Mary's Hospital in Kankakee, Illinois on July 28, 1990.

This was her final pilgrimage. Since 1985 our Sister Mary fought valiantly to "choose life" in her struggle with cancer. She rarely dwelt on her illness, only concerned herself with living each day. Now in these final days, without words, she said her goodbyes to her family and our Sisters. Our Sisters at St. Clare House of Prayer, and her sisters Rose and Georgiann kept vigil at her side. She was born to life eternal late Tuesday evening, August 7, 1990.

Sister Mary was born on February 6, 1922 in Vičnov, Czechoslovakia to Frank and Filomena Lukas. The family emigrated to America when she was only two years old, and settled in Chicago, Illinois. There she was raised with her younger sisters Rose and Georgiann, and her brother Frank. Her family remained very close to her, and they will miss her very much.

Czechoslovakia was a cherished part of Mary's heritage. She followed avidly the news regarding the struggle for democracy during the eventful happenings of 1989. In 1987, she and her cousin visited the country of her birth, and became acquainted with some of her relatives. She spoke of the emotions she experienced during that visit when she saw the room in the house where she was born.

St. Ludmilla's Parish in Chicago was important to our Sister Mary. Here her vocation to religious life was nurtured through life in the parish and contact with our Sisters. When she was seventeen, she entered the postulancy. She would have celebrated her Golden Jubilee of Profession in 1992.

Sister Mary loved her active ministry. For thirty-four years she was a high school teacher of English and Religion, serving six of those years as principal of St. Procopius High School in Chicago, Illinois and three years as principal of SS. Peter and Paul High School in Chicago, Illinois. She also responded to a Congregation call to be Aspirant Director for a year. She served as a parish minister in Loveland, Colorado and Elgin, Illinois, and she was a core member of St. Clare House of Prayer for nine years.

Her ministry was varied, but a theme persisted. She was a woman who believed in community life, experienced a deep longing for prayer, and possessed a compassionate heart for all God's people, especially those who were poor and unfortunate.



She was principal at St. Procopius in the years when it changed to an inner-city school. She wrote how she wanted to remain there, because she wished to "contribute something definite in improving the lot of these poor people struggling to earn a livelihood." Many experienced the blessings of her compassion.

Sister Mary's "heart's desire" was her ministry at St. Clare House of Prayer. She was a core member there from 1977-81 and again 1985 until her death. In 1976 she wrote about her desire to be at the House of Prayer and her struggle that her desire might be "too selfish", and that "the Congregation may need me for some other service."

These words, written in 1978 capture her belief in her ministry at the House of Prayer. "My hope is that the Holy Spirit may, in God's own good time, grant me the gift of prayer and contemplation, all for the greater glory of God, and for the spreading of the knowledge of Jesus' love as revealed in the Gospel. I feel confident that Jesus will take care of using my life of prayer and work here at St. Clare's in such a way that the effects may become apostolic." Little did she realize that she would add physical suffering to her apostolate when after a few months after her return to the House of Prayer in 1985, she was diagnosed with cancer.

During her time at the House of Prayer she was actively engaged in feeding the poor, and began a Franciscan Third Order Group. One of her deep joys was to plan the liturgy this spring during which two of the candidates made profession as tertiaries.

Sister Mary was deeply respected and loved as minister, friend and sister. She was a quiet and gentle woman, yet knew how to be articulate and determined when she felt it was necessary. She had an exuberance for life and loved an adventure. She was "at home" enjoying good music, watching a Notre Dame football game, baking "braided sweet bread with white raisins and slivered almonds", playing Texas Canasta, and nurturing beautiful roses in her garden.

Sister Mary, we thank you for your 50 years as our Sister. We will miss you. We weren't quite ready for you to leave us this soon, but we trust that you continue to be our Sister and intercede for us. We ask to become, like you, valiant women with a deep desire to integrate in our lives the gift of prayer, active ministry and community life. We rejoice with you as you spend all eternity with your God, forever and ever. Amen! Alleluia!