

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

October 23, 1987

Dear Sisters and Associates,

Several days before she died, Mother Borrromeo Mack began to plan her retirement. She conversed with Sister Lois Prebil and Mother's good friend, Sister Mercia Gillivan, and told them that this would be her last formal year of teaching in the classroom. Although her mind was still very sharp, Mother Borrromeo was able to face the fact that she could not physically endure the required activity. It was an opportunity...and Sister Lois used it to thank Mother Borrromeo, in the name of all of the Sisters of St. Francis, for her great contribution to the people of Joliet and beyond. On Mother Borrromeo's last day in the classroom, the very day of her death, she stopped to greet Sister Carol Jander of the Franciscan Early Learning Center, told her of her plans to retire, and expressed her appreciation for that program's contribution to the education of young people. These and other recent contacts gave indication that she was preparing for more than her last year of teaching. At 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21st, Mother Borrromeo asked for Sister Peter Didier who checked her vital signs, found them within normal range and chatted with her for a bit about her health and the minor pain she was experiencing. After returning to her station, Sister Peter soon received a second call. Responding to this call, she found Mother Borrromeo still seated in her lounge chair, fully clothed, but breathing her last. It was a quick and peaceful death witnessed by Sister Peter and Sister Mercia.

When she was not quite six, a determined little Chicago girl had resolved that she would be a teacher. This resolve carried young Frieda through a long and varied educational career that only ended seventy eight years later. On the very last day of her life she concluded this educational career by teaching a class on the Constitution in the Joliet Adult Education Center at St. Francis Academy.

In 1919 Catherine Frieda Mack entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate when she she was not quite sixteen. August 12, 1922 was her Profession Day which she describes as the "happiest, most beautiful day" of her life. After teaching grade and high school in several midwestern cities, Sister Borrromeo returned to St. Francis Academy. In 1944 she was appointed principal and continued in that role for twelve years. She became know as the "Principal Who Cared." She influenced the lives of the teachers as well as the students. During her term, and because of her leadership, the enrollment rose to a new high of one-thousand students requiring expansion and the new St. Francis Academy building at Larkin and Ingalls.



On June 15, 1956, she was elected to her first term as Superior General of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate. During this first term plans were begun for Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home. It was her vision and energy that led to the breaking of ground for OLA in May of 1960. In 1962, Mother Borrromeo was re-elected as Superior General. It was in 1963 that she and her Councillors determined the establishment of the first Joliet Franciscan Mission in Brazil. "Mother Borrromeo was the first Sister I ever saw," recalls our Sister Teresinha Mendonça Del'Acqua. Teresinha was 12 years old when Mother Borrromeo visited Brazil for the first time in 1963 and they met at a family dinner in Santa Helena. This ministry of the Joliet Franciscans continues today almost twenty-five years later. Twenty Joliet Franciscans, including 11 native Brazilians are living out and developing our commitment to the Church and the people of Brazil. Mother Borrromeo maintained her interest in and love for Brazil until the very last.

In 1968, when her terms as Superior General had ended, Mother Borrromeo went to Our Lady of Angels to live, "but not to retire." At Christmastime of that year, she heard of the need and offered her services at the Peter Claver Center, a parish project of Sacred Heart Church on the East side of Joliet. That was the beginning of what is now known as the Joliet Adult Education Center. After twenty years, more than 600 adults have received their high school diplomas as a result of this initiative. In addition many other human needs have been met, as is testified by people of various backgrounds and cultures who were truly loved by her and who loved her in return. Many awards and citations received in recognition of her various achievements attest to Mother Borrromeo's successful adult-education endeavor. Speaking specifically about her ministry to refugees, in a Herald News interview, Mother Borrromeo said, "I will help these people until I can no longer function. They are a beautiful people, very industrious and very easy to work with....I think they will be a strength to our country. They truly believe in democracy." Mother was a living testimony of our Congregation goal of commitment to the Poor and Powerless.

To our Joliet Franciscans who mourn her death, especially to her dear friend, Sister Mercia, we offer our loving care and support. To all her surviving relatives and friends, we offer our sympathy and continued friendship. The life of Mother Borrromeo Mack was a life of service. She served the Congregation and many others with a tenacity and a drive uncommon to most. We thank her for this total gift of herself...and we are certain that in return she has received the final gift of Everlasting Life. May peace be hers.

The Governing Board

MOTHER M. BORROMEO MACK



Born: March 15, 1904
Parents: William and Mary (Bernert) Mack
Postulancy: September 15, 1919
Novitiate: August 12, 1920
First Profession: August 12, 1922
Final Profession: August 12, 1925
Died: Wednesday, October 21, 1987 at 4:20 p.m. at
Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home

Ministry:

1921 - 1924 St. John the Baptist, Joliet, IL, Grades 2 and 4
1924 - 1927 St. Bernard, Joliet, IL, Grades 3, 4 and 5
1927 - 1929 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, Freshman Home Room and Classes
1929 - 1932 St. Mary, Columbus, OH, Latin, French and English
1932 - 1934 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, Latin and French
1934 - 1935 University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Graduate Study
February, Sigel High School, Sigel, IL, English and History
1935 - 1936 Sigel High School, Sigel, IL, English and History
1936 - 1944 St Peter, Mansfield, OH, Latin, French, English, Dramatics
1944 - 1956 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, Principal
1950 - 1956 - Community Council
1956 - 1968 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Superior General
1968 - 1969 Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL, Chief of Staff
1969 - 1975 Peter Claver Education Center, Joliet, IL, Teaching
1975 - 1987 Joliet Education Center, SFA, Joliet, IL, Adult Education

Wake: Friday, October 23, 1987 from 2 - 7 p.m.
with prayer service at 4:15 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial: Friday, October 23, 1987 at 7 p.m.

Burial: Saturday, October 24, 1987 from OLA at 9 a.m.
to Resurrection Cemetery.