

# *Sisters of St. Francis*

o f M a r y I m m a c u l a t e

Sister Donna Marie Baier was born in Chicago, Illinois, on August 26, 1936, to Wilhelmina (Jaeger) and George Baier. One of five children, Sister Donna Marie (Dorothy Elizabeth) had one brother, Brother Leonard George, FSC, and three sisters, Sister M. George Baier, OSF, Bernice (Harry) Bloom, Beatrice (Kenneth) Leyendecker, all of whom have preceded her in death. She entered our Joliet Franciscan congregation in 1954 from Sacred Heart Englewood Parish in Chicago.

After majoring in science at the College of St. Francis, Donna Marie became an elementary school teacher, whose skills in the classroom were immediately recognized and affirmed by principals in every school where she taught. After 16 years, Sr. Donna Marie became the long-time principal of St. Joseph School in Manhattan, Illinois, a position she held for 21 years. As is often the case in small schools, she did double duty as a teacher every one of those years.

Her ministry there alongside her great friend, Sr. Bernadine Hasse, brought her much joy and many happy memories of their time together. They enjoyed their home life and travels as well as their hard work together on behalf of the parish and town. As her friend, Bernie's needs grew greater and greater during her last few years of life, Donna Marie was ever at her side – reading to her, praying with her, tending to her physical as well as emotional needs. She accompanied her to the very last moment with patience and friendship.

Donna Marie's love for education was evident in her great satisfaction of seeing her students grow intellectually but equally as young people who cared about others. She was the model of that, as she cared for entire families at her schools and later for the residents at Our Lady of Angels. Some of our sisters tended to stick together and didn't really get to know the other residents. Donna Marie could tell you the name of every resident and something about them. She talked to them in the gift shop and in the halls. She knew if someone did not make it to mass one day when they normally would be there. She would not have called herself a pastoral minister, but she nonetheless lived that ministry every day.

# Alleluia!



*Sister Donna Marie Baier, OSF*

Another great love of hers was her family. It was clear to us who were with Donna on her last day that she was absolutely treasured by her nieces, Lorraine, Rita and Eileen. Their beloved Aunt Dorothy was leaving them, but like her, they knew to be practical – they didn't want her to suffer and were taking with them so many fond and cherished memories of her in their lives.

Her third and fourth great loves, of course, were the God who called her and what she saw as a privilege to serve God as a woman religious: "Living as a Franciscan means operating each day with the intention of being alert to ways I can live simply with my eyes open to how I can be of assistance to others. It means being grateful for what I have received and sharing where and what I can with others."

Donna was a prolific, thoughtful card writer. Even with the challenging news that OLA would be closing, Donna was among the most gracious people we encountered. Though she couldn't thank every person who helped her and all of our sisters, she wrote in a note of appreciation: "You are too numerous to mention by name, or your involvement, but you and the Lord knows who you are and what you did. Saying you are in my prayers doesn't seem adequate, but if you ever come to Minooka and visit me in Apartment 112, maybe you will accept a snack from my reserves." Her reserves of snacks, prayers, wit, affection and gratitude ran deep in this special Franciscan woman, that is certain! Amen! Alleluia!

# *Sister Donna Marie Baier, OSF*

*August 26, 1936—March 28, 2023*

<i>Born:</i>	August 26, 1936
<i>Parents:</i>	George Baier and Wilhelmina Jaeger
<i>Postulancy:</i>	September 6, 1954
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 13, 1955
<i>First Profession:</i>	August 12, 1957
<i>Final Profession:</i>	August 13, 1960
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	March 28, 2023

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## **Ministry History**

1957-1958	Teacher: Grade 4, St. Francis de Sales, Toledo, Ohio
1958-1960	Teacher: Grades 4 and 5, St. Peter, Mansfield, Ohio
1960-1962	Teacher: Grades 4 and 6, Cathedral of St. Raymond, Joliet, Illinois
1962-1966	Teacher: Grade 7, Immaculate Conception, Columbus, Ohio
1966-1970	Superintendent/Principal: Grade 8, Annunciation, Aurora, Illinois
1970-1973	Principal: Annunciation, Aurora
1973-1994	Principal/Teacher: St. Joseph, Manhattan, Illinois
1994-1995	Clerical Work: Franciscan Learning Center, Joliet
1995-1996	Secretary: Franciscan Learning Center/Volunteer: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
1996-1997	Secretary: Franciscan Learning Center, Joliet
1997-2016	Director of Volunteers: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
2016-2019	Gift Shop: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
2019-2023	Community Service: Our Lady of Angels

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<i>Interment:</i>	Section 8, Lot 5, Grave 8, Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	Her parents, George Baier and Wilhelmina Jaeger, her brother, Brother Leonard George, FSC, and her three sisters, Sister M. George Baier, OSF, Bernice (Harry) Bloom, Beatrice (Kenneth) Leyendecker
<i>Survived by:</i>	Many nieces and nephews, friends and students

*Rest in Peace, Sister Donna Marie!*