

Sisters of St. Francis

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

Sister Louise Marie Skoch once said that her life had always been exciting, rewarding, and filled with love and energy. For that reason, she said her favorite line of Mary's Magnificat was "God who is mighty has done great things for me." In one more great act of love, the Lord invited Louise to leave Ascension Villa Franciscan Place on January 28, 2024, and embark on the next exciting phase of her new life beyond the one she had known for almost 95 years.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, on February 28, 1929, and named Mary Ann, Sister Louise Marie was the third child of Louise (Michalek) and Anton Skoch, immigrants from Czechoslovakia. Starting life with two older brothers, Mary Ann later was gifted with three younger sisters, all of whom she treasured. In 1974, when writing an article for the "Catholic Chronicle" in Toledo about the importance of religious education in the home, Sister Louise Marie recalled her own religious formation as a child. "I can still see the small holy water font by the kitchen door and remember splashing it over myself while making a sign of the cross, greeting Mom and Dad with 'Praised be Jesus Christ,'" she wrote. Her home parish, St. Procop in Cleveland, continued to nurture her faith as she attended the parish grade school and high school and was influenced by the Sisters there to join the Joliet Franciscans in 1946.

Louise Marie's stated objective for entering the convent was "to work more efficiently for the greater honor and glory of God"...and that she did! With a B.A. in Religion and an M.A. in Theology from the College of St. Francis in Joliet and a second Master's Degree in Religious Education from Loyola University in Chicago (Summa Cum Laude every time), Louise built an impressive resume as she taught in grade

Alleluia!



Sister Louise Marie Skoch, OSF

schools in Illinois and Ohio, turned to religious education in high schools in Illinois and Florida, became a diocesan consultant and then assistant director of the Office of Religious Education in Toledo, Ohio, and then took her religious education background to Colorado, North Carolina, and California.

Along the way, her ministry included teaching, writing, creating religious education programs, giving presentations, serving parish needs on many levels and constantly updating educational practices in the light of Church Documents. She continued her studies at The Catholic University of America, Notre Dame, Loyola University in Chicago, Harvard, a Biblical Resources Study Center in Israel, and the Mile Hi Scripture Institute in Colorado.

Sister Louise Marie became a nationally known speaker, author, and researcher in many areas of religious development. She felt that the gift she could bring to her ministry was a special joy and excitement. In fact, a parishioner at St. Joan of Arc in Arvada, Colorado, where Louise Marie was the Director of Religious Education, said, "Sister Louise Marie has great enthusiasm for everything she does, and we all know her as a most dynamic and loving person. Her

excitement reaches its greatest height when she speaks of her work in this parish.”

While in Toledo, serving as Assistant Director of Religious Education for the diocese, Louise hosted a weekly television program, “All Things New.” She orchestrated, for example, the appearance of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Mister Rogers, and the Toledo Symphony Orchestra. “I had the opportunity and the grace to greet Mother Teresa again when she visited Denver, Colorado, in May of 1989,” said Louise. “She made me feel like we had been friends forever.” Many years later, when Sister Louise Marie had returned to Joliet in retirement, a community friend, Sister Roberta Naegele, had the opportunity to share a “Mother Teresa moment” with her. Louise Marie pointed out a Mother Teresa statue outside St. Raymond’s Cathedral. They sat together on a bench by the statue, enjoying peaceful quiet and memories.

One of Sister Louise Marie’s favorite assignments, and also one of her last ministries outside Joliet, was when she taught English as a second language for the San Diego Community College district. “It was exciting!” she said. “I felt like the whole world was present in my classroom through the stories and customs that my students shared. They taught me so much.” Evidently, her students appreciated what she taught them too. She received a letter from one of them from Bucharest, Romania, who expressed gratitude for her teaching, saying, “I know that you are a good teacher and a wonderful woman!”

This wonderful woman was also a good listener, loved to give compliments, and knew how to make people feel special. She was simple but elegant in her appearance...so much so that her Sisters in the west, who came together for meetings and “play time” from Arizona, Colorado, and California, bought her some blue jeans, tennis shoes, and a tee-shirt so she would “dress down” when the group was hiking or picnicking in the desert. She took the ribbing with a delighted smile.

That smile was radiant. When Sister Roberta made her visiting rounds at the Villa during this past year, she would always awaken Louise to see her big smile. “I’d tell her how I needed a jump start of joy for my day, so I came to her for that. Louise touched your heart strings. Even in her dementia, she reached me.”

And so, dear Louise Marie, our sister, take your smile and your listening heart, your excitement about life and learning, and your love for your family and community and students into your new life where God, who has done great things for you, now welcomes you home.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia Letter written by Sr. Karen Berry, OSF

Sister Louise Marie Skoch, OSF

February 28, 1929—January 28, 2024

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Born:</i> | February 28, 1929 |
| <i>Parents:</i> | Anton Skoch and Louise Michalek |
| <i>Postulancy:</i> | September 4, 1946 |
| <i>Novitiate:</i> | August 12, 1947 |
| <i>First Profession:</i> | August 12, 1949 |
| <i>Final Profession:</i> | August 12, 1952 |
| <i>Entered New Life:</i> | January 28, 2024 |

Ministry History

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1949-1957 | Teacher: Grades 1, 2, 3, St. Cyril and Methodius, Chicago, Illinois |
| 1957-1958 | Teacher: Grade 1, St. Procopius, Chicago |
| 1958-1959 | Teacher: Grade 1, St. Bonafice, Chicago |
| 1959-1960 | Teacher: Grades 3, 4, St. Edward, Ashland, Ohio |
| 1960-1961 | Teacher: Grades 2, 3, St. John the Baptist, Joliet, Illinois |
| 1961-1962 | Teacher: Grade 5, St. Francis of Assisi, Chicago |
| 1962-1964 | Teacher: Grades 5, 8, St. Mary, Des Plaines, Illinois |
| 1964-1965 | Teacher: Grade 8, Sacred Heart, Hubbard Woods, Illinois |
| 1965-1966 | Teacher: Grade 8, St. Pius, Lombard, Illinois |
| 1966-1967 | Teacher: Religion/Chairperson/CCD Moderator: St. Francis Academy, Joliet |
| 1967-1968 | Teacher: Religion, St. Francis Academy, Joliet |
| 1968-1971 | Teacher: Religion/CCD Moderator/NHS Moderator/CSA Club: Cardinal Gibbons, Fort Lauderdale, Florida |
| 1971-1976 | Diocesan Consultant, Office of Religious Education, Toledo, Ohio |
| 1976-1978 | Administrative Assistant Research and Development: Office of Religious Education, Toledo |
| 1978-1985 | Assistant Director: Office of Religious Education, Toledo |
| 1985-1986 | Associate Director of Religious Education: Catholic Education Vicariate, Denver, Colorado |
| 1986-1992 | Director of Religious Education: St. Joan of Arc, Arvada, Colorado |
| 1992-1993 | Director of Religious Education: St. Paul the Apostle, Greensboro, North Carolina |
| 1993-1995 | Director of Catechetical Ministry: Santa Sophia Parish, Spring Valley, California |
| 1994-1995 | El Cajon, California |
| 1995-2003 | English as a Second Language (ESL), San Diego Community College, San Diego, California |
| 2003-2005 | ESL, College, El Cajon, California |
| 2005-2007 | ESL, Poway Unified School District, Poway, California |
| 2007-2008 | Parish Ministry: Church of St. Luke, El Cajon |
| 2008-2019 | Community Service, Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet |
| 2019-2023 | Prayer Ministry: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet |
| 2023-2024 | Ministry of Prayer and Presence: Ascension Villa Franciscan Place, Joliet, Illinois |
| <i>Interment:</i> | Section 8, Lot 329, Grave 12B, Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois |
| <i>Predeceased by:</i> | Her parents, Anton Skoch and Louise Michalek, her brother Anthony (Jean Sikora), Sisters Lillian (Donald) Kent, and Helen Hanslik, sister-in-law Helen Holy, brother-in-law Alfred Arthur |
| <i>Survived by:</i> | Her brother Joseph Skoch, sister Margaret Arthur, several nieces and nephews |

Rest in Peace, Sister Louise Marie!