

Sisters of St. Francis

of Mary Immaculate

Sister Mary Agnes Cross died peacefully on September 17, 2024, the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis. Being a Franciscan was a desire of her life even in childhood as she admired her parents' connection to nature. Her father, Frank, reminded her of St. Francis when he would get honey from the beehives and none of the bees would harm him. She says, "I would go out and get swarmed by them." Her mother, Agnes, enjoyed cooking the vegetables her dad grew, and she decorated the house with his flowers. Mary Agnes was proud to be a twin to Joseph, her only sibling.

As a young girl, Mary Agnes read *The Perfect Joy of St. Francis* by Felix Timmermans. When she first read it, Francis' love for all creatures resonated with her. Then she read it at various life stages and found deeper meanings in Francis' life each time. More recently she wrote, "The passages that strike me now are: 'Oh, God, how beautiful you have made everything' and 'Life is so simple. The essence of life is love.'"

After twenty years with the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mary Agnes became a member of our Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate in 1976.

During Mary Agnes' early days in ministry, she taught in elementary schools and then directed Religious Education programs in several parishes. Within her parish ministry, Mary Agnes began another ministry: she dressed up and became "Monsy" the Clown to the delight of both children and adults!

She was called to minister in health care and became a registered Licensed Practical Nurse. She continued her studies and redirected this ministry to serve persons with dementia. One of her favorite ministries was at the Memory and Aging Services at the Dolan Alzheimer Center at Heather Hill in Chardon, Ohio, where she worked with persons with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. There she gave person-centered care where she offered

Alleluia!



Sister Mary Agnes Cross, OSF

meaningful service and compassion to each one in her care.

People enjoyed Mary Agnes' communication through emails, phone calls and personal notes, always in color! She simply and honestly expressed her thoughts and feelings. Visiting with Mary Agnes in her retirement years at Our Lady of Angels, Heritage Woods or at St. Patrick's Residence was a joy. In her room was her favorite picture, a photo of her First Communion class. In her deep voice, she would start a conversation or respond to any question by including, "Honey, . . ." While she was feeling better, she would go to other sisters, take a comic strip to entertain them and her office book to pray with them.

During her later years of life, Mary Agnes dealt realistically with many serious health issues. She wrote several things on the inside cover of her well-worn office book including, "Blessed are you, O God, Creator of the universe; enlighten our darkness and guide all humanity to your truth and Eternal Light now and always."

Mary Agnes lived her dream of being a Franciscan. How significant it is that she passed into Eternal Life on a special feast of St. Francis!

ALLELUIA!

**Alleluia Letter written by
Sisters Jane Nienaber and Lois Prebil**

(OVER)

Sister Mary Agnes Cross, OSF

May 7, 1939—September 17, 2024

<i>Born:</i>	May 7, 1939
<i>Parents:</i>	Frank J. Cross and Agnes Hoffman
<i>Postulancy:</i>	August 12, 1956
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 12, 1957
<i>First Profession:</i>	August 12, 1959
<i>Final Profession:</i>	August 12, 1962
<i>Transfer of Commitment:</i>	August 15, 1976
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	September 17, 2024

Ministry History

1975-1978	Religious Education Coordinator: South Regional Cluster, Ashkum, Illinois
1978-1979	Religious Education Coordinator: St. John, Woodhull, Illinois
1979-1980	Religious Education Coordinator: St. John Vianney, Cambridge, Illinois
1980-1982	Religious Education Coordinator: St. Andrew, Murphysboro, Illinois
1982-1985	Religious Education Coordinator: St. Thomas, Newton, Illinois
1985	Teacher: Religion, St. Thomas, Newton, Illinois
1985-1986	Participant: Wellsprings, Westmont, Illinois
1986-1987	Participant: Personal Growth/Enrichment Program, Motherhouse, Joliet, Illinois
1987-1989	Director of Religious Education: Immaculate Conception, Morris, Illinois
1989-1990	Typist: Center for Correctional Concerns, Joliet, Illinois
1990-1991	Director of Religious Education: Annunciata, Chicago, Illinois
1991-1993	Housekeeper: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
1993-1994	Teacher: Adult Education Center, Joliet Junior College, Joliet
1994-1995	L.P.N. Student: J.T.H.S. School of Practical Nursing, Joliet
1995-1996	L.P.N.: Sisters' Infirmary, Alvernia Manor, Lemont, Illinois
1996-1997	Teacher: Adults GED Program, ESL, Joliet Junior College, Joliet and Home Health Care: Homes of the elderly, Joliet
1997-2000	Home Health Care: Homes of the elderly, Joliet and Teaching Adults, Center of JJC, Forest Park, Illinois
2000-2003	LPN, Motherhouse, Joliet
2003-2004	Intern Training: Corine Dolan Heather Hill, Chardon, Ohio
2004-2007	Unit Assistant: Corine Dolan Center, Heather Hill, Chardon, Ohio
2007-2008	Unit Assistant: Dolan Center for Memory and Aging, University Hospitals, Chardon
2008-2009	OLA Sister Residents Care / Companion: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet
2009-2011	Parish Volunteer: Assumption BVM Parish, Chicago, Illinois
2011-2013	Volunteer: Kolbe Jail Ministries, Augustinian Friars, Chicago
2013-2014	Helper for memory loss residents, Companion Sister: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
2014-2015	Companion Sister, Volunteer, Ministry of Prayer, Presence and Praise: OLA
2015-2016	Volunteer: OLA, Joliet
2016-2023	Ministry of Presence and Prayer: OLA, Joliet
2023-2024	Ministry of Presence and Prayer: Heritage Woods, Minooka, Illinois
2023-2024	Ministry of Presence and Prayer: St. Patrick's Residence, Naperville, Illinois

<i>Interment:</i>	Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	Her parents, Frank J. Cross and Agnes Hoffman
<i>Survived by:</i>	Her twin brother, Joseph (Ada) Cross, her nephew, Michael Cross, many relatives and friends

Rest in Peace, Sister Mary Agnes!