

Sisters of St. Francis

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

Once, while Sister Janet Tucci was ministering to the poor of Sacred Heart Parish in Hopkins Park, Illinois, from 1978 to 1983, she wrote a report to her Franciscan community which began like this: "There is a song entitled *I Heard the Lord Call My Name* by Jacob Krieger. In some of its lyrics are included the words, 'Take His hand; we are glory bound.'"

Janet was born, glory-bound, on May 5, 1934, to Samuel Tucci from Italy and Justine Hirsch from Joliet. She was raised in Joliet with five siblings: Richard, Sam Jr., Kenneth, Russell, and Norma. Friends growing up with her describe her fun-loving ways...like sledding down the hill near her home...and her independent spirit...like doing something first and asking permission for it later. Janet was attracted to the Franciscan Order during her years in high school at St. Francis Academy. After graduation, she joined the Joliet Franciscans in 1952 and attended the College of St. Francis where she received a BA degree in Sociology. At DePaul University in Chicago, she received in MA in Education. And she was glory bound!

As an educator, Sister Janet spent four years teaching second grade at Catholic schools in Ohio and Illinois. That was followed by teaching grades five through eight in Illinois, Ohio, and Alabama. A sister who worked with her described her as "having perfect control of hard-to-handle classes of middle schoolers who absolutely loved her." A highlight for her as an educator came in 1965 when she received a grant for teachers of Disadvantaged Youth at Alverno College in Milwaukee. For seven years, she was the principal of St. Mary's school in Fairfield, Alabama. While living there, Janet was introduced to the Charismatic Movement. The depth and sincerity of the participants

Alleluia!



Sister Janet Tucci, OSF

moved her deeply, so she started a prayer group at St. Mary's church. "The Black members really taught me to pray," she said. "They were not hampered by language as they prayed from their hearts. I felt privileged to be in their company."

Still glory bound, Janet was drawn to the very poor in the black community of Hopkins Park, Illinois, where she and her classmate, Sister Margaret Krieger, experienced inter-congregational living with three Sister Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary. Together with the pastor of Sacred Heart Church and a layman, "Brother" Lewis, they shared meals and prayer, simple living, and a spirit of selfless giving to the people in the poorest area of Illinois. "I'm doing what I've been called to do. The people I minister to are important to me," she said. "I also learn from them. They keep me humble and grateful."

Taking the hand of God once again, and still serving the poor, Janet spent 6 ½ years at the Will County jail teaching residents basic learning skills and preparing them for their GED tests. When looking at her Franciscan community's past, present and future with regard to ministry, she observed that the gift

from the past was the heritage of Sisters with their quest for prayer and their noble courage. She saw, in the present, that heritage being carried out in a variety of ministries. "In the future," she said, "I envision our Congregation more responsive to a living faith, a call to deeper poverty, and direct involvement with the needs of the poor and the disenfranchised."

Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister wrote, in a reflection for the new year, "There is more to each of us than what shows above the surface of our lives." A sister who knew Janet well said she had "a fake façade of a crabby, complaining, hard old lady (way before she was even old)...with a quick twinkle in her eye followed by 'tee-hee'." Those who could see past the façade found her humorous, great to speak with, a good listener, a person with definite opinions but accepting of others with differing opinions. "She was full of wisdom and very prayerful," said a good friend, "but during card games she was a fierce competitor, and had her opponents laughing so much that their watery eyes couldn't see the cards." Janet described her interests as socializing with friends, playing games, reading, cross stitching, watching sports on TV, listening to music and working logic, crossword and jigsaw puzzles.

After prison ministry, Sister Janet worked for her sisters living in retirement at Our Lady of Angels nursing home. As their business manager, she paid their bills, filled out Medicare forms, prepared their budget and handled their need for checks. "I listened to the

sisters and their concerns," she said, as she visited and prayed with them. Sister Janet left us on December 30, 2025, after her own time spent as a nursing home resident.

This letter began with a reference to a report Janet wrote to the community while working in Hopkins Park. She ended that report by quoting from "a song which we 'Soul' folk often sing here at Sacred Heart. It is called *Glory Land* by Gary Ault." We can imagine Janet is sharing those words with us again today:

We who now live after Him must follow
his command,
To share what He has done for us with
men of every land.
That when He comes in glory to lead us
to our home,
He can claim us for His very own.

You are glory-bound, dear Janet!
Amen, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Alleluia Letter written by
Sister Karen Berry, OSF**

Sister Janet Tucci, OSF
May 5, 1934—December 30, 2025

Born: May 5, 1934
Parents: Samuel Tucci and Justine Hirsch
Postulancy: January 2, 1952
Novitiate: August 13, 1953
First Profession: August 12, 1955
Final Profession: August 13, 1958
Entered New Life: December 30, 2025

Ministry History

1955-1956 Teacher: Grade 2, Most Pure Heart of Mary, Shelby, Ohio
1956-1957 Teacher: Grade 2, St. Peter, Mansfield, Ohio
1977-1959 Teacher: Grade 2, Sacred Heart, (Hubbard Woods), Winnetka, Illinois
1959-1962 Teacher: Grade 6, Immaculate Conception, Columbus, Ohio
1962-1966 Teacher: Grade 6, Sacred Heart, (Englewood), Chicago, Illinois
1966-1970 Teacher: Grade 7, St. Mary, Fairfield, Alabama
1970-1973 Principal: St. Mary, Fairfield
1973-1976 Principal/Teacher: St. Mary, Fairfield
1976-1977 Teacher: Grade 8, St. Clement, Chicago
1977-1978 Teacher: Sacred Heart, Chicago
1978-1983 Ministry to the poor, Sacred Heart, Hopkins Park, Illinois
1983-1984 Participant, Wellsprings, Westmont, Illinois
1984-1985 Teacher: Will County Jail, Joliet, Illinois
1985-1988 Teacher/Director: Developmental Reading, Correctional Concern Center, Joliet
1988-1989 Teacher: Correctional Concern Center, Joliet
1989-1991 Teacher/Advocate: Correctional Concern Center, Joliet
1992-1993 Receptionist: Our Lady of Angels Motherhouse, Joliet
1993-2005 Receptionist/Bookkeeper: Sister Residents, Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet

2005-2009 Local Treasurer for Sisters: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet
2009-2023 Sisters' Support: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet
2023-2025 Ministry of Presence and Prayer: Avantara, (Villa Franciscan) Joliet

Interment: Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
Predeceased by: Her parents, Samuel and Justine (Hirsch) Tucci, her brothers: Kenneth (Gloria) Tucci; Samuel (Shirley) Tucci; Richard (Jeanette) Tucci; and her sister, Norma Tucci.
Survived by: Her brother, Russell Tucci, many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews

Rest in Peace, Sister Janet!