



Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

It was Tuesday, October 6. The world rested in the afterglow of celebrating the heavenly birthday of Francis of Assisi. The sun was setting quietly in the west, and our Sister Eileen Bannon quietly slipped out of this earthly world to join her Beloved and hear the choirs of heaven singing her welcome. Her last several years of living in a silent world were over.

Sister Eileen's life began right here in Joliet. She was born on July 15, 1921, to Henrietta Braun and Robert Joseph Bannon. She was the second of six children, three of whom are deceased: Robert, Claire and Margaret. She is survived by her sister, Mary Alyce Kielp, and her brother, Joseph, who has been living at OLA, just across the hall from her, for the last few months. The family grew up in St. Patrick Parish and Eileen attended St. Patrick grade school. After two years at Joliet Township High School, Eileen finished her high school years at St. Francis Academy. Her time at the Academy may have been the Lord's gentle way of guiding her to the Joliet Franciscans because, after graduating in 1939, she entered the postulancy in 1940. Receiving the habit as a novice in 1941, Eileen also received the new name: Sister Rose Francis. First vows followed in 1943 and final vows in 1946.

Majoring in English, Sister Rose Francis received her bachelor's degree from the College of St. Francis. Later she attended summer school at St. Louis University and received her master's degree in theater. It was not difficult to see that theater was her greatest love. Teaching in five different high schools in Illinois and Ohio, as well as at the College of St. Francis, Sister Eileen was able to use her talent for drama and theater by directing plays and moderating drama clubs. When asked what her main areas of study were she simply wrote: "Public speaking and theater." Hobbies? "Attending theater productions." Students in her speech classes were given a bonus because she didn't just focus on speaking, but, as one student wrote: "She used just enough drama to get her point across."

But there was a quiet drama going on in the heart of Eileen during her vowed life, a drama of her life with her God. A casual remark of one of our Sisters about a thirty day retreat ignited a desire within her and she wrote: "But the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was my

Alleluia!



Sister Eileen Bannon, OSF

guide." Having made several retreats at the Jesuit Retreat House in Barrington, Illinois, it was a natural choice for her to make her thirty day retreat there. Writing about her experience she said: "I began a journey which led to an intimate experience of God. . . My hopes and dreams were overwhelmingly fulfilled." In the beauty of nature that surrounded the retreat house, Eileen was deeply moved. She explains: "I became alive in total response to all that surrounded me. I saw. I tasted. I heard. I felt. I became a person. I rejoiced in my womanhood. . . I laughed. I literally danced. I fully recognized the giftedness of God." And the Lord had another offer: Sister Eileen would respond by becoming a Core member of our House of Prayer then situated in Kankakee, Illinois. Leaving the active ministry of teaching and joining the contemplative community at St. Clare House of Prayer was a dream come true. In order to better share her dream with others who would visit at the House of Prayer, Eileen spent several months at the Jesuit Spiritual Direction Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Now she would be able to spend herself for others as they searched to find a deeper relationship with God. Eileen speaks for herself and all she would guide: "Sharing these joys with others . . . is the work of a lifetime."

Seven years ago, the last act of Eileen's drama began. Moving to Our Lady of Angels, Eileen continued to struggle with her hearing loss, a problem which had been with her for many years. Speech slowly left her as well, and her life became increasingly silent to the world around her.

Eileen, we cannot imagine what wonders the Lord was working in you during that time. We ask you to pray for us that we too may listen as you did to what God invites us to, and to respond as generously as you did. May you now dance with your God. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Sister Eileen Bannon, OSF

July 15, 1921—October 6, 2015

<i>Born:</i>	July 15, 1921
<i>Parents:</i>	Robert J. Bannon and Henrietta (Braun) Bannon
<i>Postulancy:</i>	September 4, 1940
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 12, 1941
<i>First Profession:</i>	August 12, 1943
<i>Final Profession:</i>	August 12, 1946
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	October 6, 2015

Ministry History

1943-1946	Teacher: English, History, Algebra, Religion; St. Francis de Sales, Chicago, Illinois
1946-1953	Teacher: English, Religion, Speech, Journalism, Library, Dramatics Club, School Paper; St. Mary, Columbus, Ohio
1953-1958	Teacher: Religion, English, Speech, Dramatics, Senior Debate, School Paper; SS. Peter and Paul, Chicago
1958-1963	Teacher: Religion, Speech, English, Thespians, Senior Play; St. Francis Academy, Joliet, Illinois
1963-1967	Teacher: Speech, Drama, Student Council; St. Peter High School, Mansfield, Ohio
1967-1988	Teacher: Speech, Drama, Theater; College of St. Francis, Joliet
1988-2008	Core Member, Spiritual Direction: St. Clare House of Prayer, Kankakee, Illinois
2008-2015	Community Service: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet

<i>Wake:</i>	Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Prayer Service:</i>	Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Mass of Christian Burial:</i>	Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Burial:</i>	Wednesday, October 14, 2015, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
<i>Interment:</i>	Section 8, Lot 360, Grave 8, Resurrection Cemetery
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	By her parents, Robert J. Bannon and Henrietta (Braun) Bannon, her brother, Robert, and sisters Margaret (Peggy) Baron and Claire Burke
<i>Survived by:</i>	Her brother, Joseph and sister, Mary Alyce Kielp

Rest in Peace, Sister Eileen!