

Sister M. Mercia Gillivan, O.S.F.



Born: September 29, 1910  
 Parents: Edward and Abbie (Cady) Gillivan  
 Entered from: St. John the Evangelist, Columbus, OH  
 Postulancy: September 8, 1936  
 Novitiate: August 12, 1937  
 Profession: August 12, 1939  
 Died: Thursday, October 23, 1997 at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home at 8:05 a.m.

Ministry:

1939 - 1940 St. Francis Preparatory, Joliet, IL, Student: College of St. Francis  
 1940 - 1941 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Student: College of St. Francis  
 1941 - 1943 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, English  
 1943 - 1944 St. Peter High School, Mansfield, OH, English  
 1944 - 1959 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, English, Religion, Journalism, Secretary to Principal  
 1959 - 1962 St. Francis de Sales High School, Chicago, IL, English, Religion, Drama, School Secretary  
 1962 - 1968 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Secretary General  
 1968 - 1970 St. Francis de Sales High School, Chicago, IL, English  
 1970 - 1988 Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL, Adult Education Joliet Township  
 1988 - 1997 Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL, Retired

Wake: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL, Monday, October 27, 1997  
 2-7 p.m. with prayer service at 4:00 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL  
 Monday, October 27, 1997 at 7:00 p.m.

Burial: Tuesday, October 28, 1997 leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m.  
 to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL, S8 - L338 - G6

Survived by: her nieces, nephews and cousins

*For those who have been faithful, O Lord,  
life is not ended, but merely changed.*

Sister M. Mercia Gillivan was born in Columbus, Ohio to John and Abbie Cady Gillivan, the third of six children, preceded by Robert and John and followed by Edward, Mary Catherine and James. Baptized at St. Patrick Church in Columbus, she was given the name Anna Louise, but was always called Louise. Louise attended Holy Cross and St. John's Elementary Schools in Columbus followed by commercial school at Sacred Heart.

On September 8, 1936, after experiencing the death of both parents, Louise became a postulant with the Franciscan Sisters in Joliet. The following August 12, Louise was received into the novitiate and was given the name, Sister M. Mercia. Following first profession, Sister Mercia continued her studies at the College of St. Francis, graduating cum laude as an English major four years later.

In the fall of 1941 Sister Mercia began her ministry of secondary education at St. Francis Academy, where she taught for many years. Summers were often spent working in the office of the principal, then Sister Borromeo. The students there have fond memories of Sister Mercia as a senior class moderator, director of the annual senior play, moderator of the school paper and as an English teacher who exposed them to Shakespeare and to all forms of poetry including "The Ballad of the White Horse" and "The Hound of Heaven".

From 1962-1968 Sister Mercia served as General Secretary for the Congregation during Mother Borromeo's second term of office as General Superior. Sister Mercia's giftedness with language led her to chronicle many of the events during that administration.

In 1970 Sister Mercia began another form of ministry, working in an adult education program, founded by Mother Borromeo Mack, at the Peter Claver Center in Joliet, which later moved to the East Wing of St. Francis Academy. In these classrooms gathered a mini United Nations, with students from Laos, Viet Nam, Czechoslovakia, Mexico, Poland, the Philippines and many other places. The students were eager to learn English, to obtain a High School Diploma and to study for the citizenship exam.

In 1970 Sister Mercia moved to Our Lady of Angels where she continued her ministry of adult education. Mother Borromeo's death in 1987 was a sad event that had a profound effect on Sister Mercia. October 21st marked the 10th anniversary of that passing.

Several days later, on October 23rd, as the Sisters were leaving the chapel after the 7:30 a.m. Mass and with several sisters praying at her bedside, Sister Mercia gave her soul back to God.

Sister Mercia, we thank you for the gift of your life. We ask that you continue to pray for us, your Franciscan sisters, your relatives, your friends and former students. May you know the joy of God's loving presence forever. Amen. Alleluia.

