

Alleluia!

Sister Rita Marie Grejczik, OSF



Sister Rita Marie Grejczik was born in Chicago, Illinois, on December 14, 1904, to John and Theophila (Sowka) Grejczik, and was baptized Helen Lucille eight days later at Holy Trinity Church. She grew up in a large Catholic family with eight siblings (Frances, Florence, Edward, Violet, Angela, John, Aloysius and Michael) all of whom preceded her in death. Sister Rita Marie attended St. Wenceslaus Grade School, but cites the example and dedication of the Franciscan Sisters at her home parish, St. Pascal's, as the impetus for her decision to join the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate in Joliet. She entered the Congregation as a postulant on February 2, 1925, and was given the name Sister Rita Marie when she was received into the novitiate the following August. In a questionnaire many years later, Sister Rita Marie was asked to describe one highlight of her life, and in her typical joyful nature she named August 12, 1927, exclaiming, "Profession Day! Total renunciation of the world and all it implied." This devotion and enthusiasm for her vocation as a vowed Franciscan woman permeated Rita Marie's long life of service to God's people.

Sister Rita Marie pursued with great determination her goal to be an educator. She graduated from De Paul University, Chicago, with both bachelor's and master's degrees. She wrote on one occasion, "I've dedicated my life to God, and it is happiness to serve Him in teaching youth. Each day has new experiences; each day brings me closer to God. This is peace, contentment, joy, happiness!" Sister Rita Marie loved her students, and sought to make learning, especially learning Latin, a fun experience. Her teaching career spanned 62 years, including 12 years on the grade school level, 42 years in high school and eight years as a tutor during her retirement. It was her 25 years at St. Francis de Sales High School, Chicago (1950-59 and 1966-82) that held a special place in Rita Marie's heart. When she retired, the high school named her an honorary alumna, and presented her a plaque that said in part, "For over 50 years you

have dedicated your life to God and to His service through Catholic education. You have taught God's children the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, virtues which have been your hallmark throughout your service at de Sales...Your faith in St. Francis de Sales High School is inspirational. Your charity to students, parents and your colleagues has at one time or another given each of us the lift we so badly needed. As for your hope, it goes without question, no one with less hope than you could have remained a Cub fan this long."

Those who lived in community with Sister Rita Marie came to know and love her witty remarks and the many ways she brought joy to everyday living. A poet at heart, she often shared her writings with her sisters. On November 2, 1998, she penned the following poem, titled, "An Aspiration."

*The sun rose and spread fresh air
I, too, begin each day with a prayer.
A tiny spark from heaven above
Burst into an eternal flame of love.
Each pain or distress was an Alleluia
Caused Francis to utter "Deus Meus et Omnia."
The mystery of love in all of this.
This is the spirit of our Father St. Francis
The Franciscan notes, comical though they may be
Implied many humble lessons for me.
That when dying how happy I'll be
That the flame of my heart was burned out for thee.*

Sister Rita Marie, for 80 years God has blessed the Joliet Franciscans with your gifts and your devotion. You have been "semper fidelis," and now we return you to your Creator in heaven where you can join Francis for all eternity in proclaiming, "Deus Meus et Omnia." Amen! Alleluia!

Sister Rita Marie Grejczik, OSF
14 December 1904 - 13 March 2005

Born: December 14, 1904; Chicago, IL
Parents: John and Theophila (Sowka) Grejczik
Entered From: St. Pascal Parish; Chicago, IL
Postulancy: February 2, 1925
Novitiate: August 12, 1925
Profession: August 12, 1927
Entered New Life: March 13, 2005

Ministry History

1927-1932 Teacher; Corpus Christi, Columbus, OH
1932-1934 Teacher; St. Mary Magdalene, Columbus, OH
1934-1939 Teacher; St. John the Baptist, Joliet, IL
1939-1942 Teacher; St. Peter, Mansfield, OH
1942-1948 Teacher; St. Mary, Columbus, OH
1948-1950 Teacher; Marybrook Academy, Maumee, OH
1950-1959 Teacher; St. Francis de Sales, Chicago, IL
1959-1963 Teacher; Sacred Heart (Englewood), Chicago, IL
1963-1964 Teacher; St. Peter, Mansfield, OH
1964-1966 Teacher; SS. Peter & Paul, Chicago, IL
1966-1982 Teacher; St. Francis de Sales, Chicago, IL
1982-1990 Tutor; Motherhouse, Joliet, IL
1990-2005 Retired; Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL

Wake: Tuesday, March 15, 2005, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Wake Service: Tuesday, March 15, 2005, 4:30 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Mass of Christian Burial: Tuesday, March 15, 2005, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Burial: Wednesday, March 16, 2005; leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to
Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL
Interment: S8-L4-G1, Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL

Survived by: Nieces, nephews and cousins

Rest in Peace, Sister Rita Marie