

Alleluia!

*Irma Maria da Glória
de Oliveira, OSF*



Sister Maria da Glória Dias de Oliveira, the daughter of João Dias de Oliveira and Lázara Rodrigues de Oliveira, was born June 22, 1946 on the Sao Felipe farm in the County of Paraúna, Goiás. All together she had 21 brothers and sisters, of whom she is the fifteenth. Sister Maria da Glória studied in the Grupo Escolar Rafael Nascimento from 1958 to 1966.

She moved to Goiânia and entered the Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate on January 15, 1967 as a Posulant and began her novitiate on December 15, 1967. During this period she completed her normal school training at Colégio Santo Agostinho.

From 1970 to 1977, she worked as principal and teacher at the San Damiano Institute, while studying Pedagogy and Languages at the Catholic University of Goiás.

From 1978 to 2002, she was the principal of the Parochial School of Santa Helena. Here in Santa Helena she was also the director of the Children's Home "Santo Antônio" and the Home for the Aged "São Vicente de Paula". In order to help the situation of the elderly, while still residing in Santa Helena, she studied and concluded in 1995 the Social Studies Course at the Catholic University in Goiânia. She became an orphan at the age of 17, and this became a strong incentive for her to assume with great love and dedication the efforts to gain respect and dignity for the elderly. She always said that she cared for them as if they were her own parents.

Sister Glória was a point of reference, a strong figure for her entire family, giving attention and support at all times. Being from a large family, she always liked to have plenty of everything. In the kitchen she was a "cyclone" and at times when someone asked if this was sufficient food, she had a ready answer: "I wasn't born during the last quarter of the moon." Among the many expressions of affection she often received, we would like to quote just one example: "Thank you for being a mother to me when my own mother was never present. Thank you for trying to help me become a better person and for being my friend."

Sister Glória was a person who fought for the things she believed in. She often said that she would give her last drop of blood for education. She believed that through education a person could become the protagonist of her (his) own life history. And she always found room to help the youth, children and adolescents who didn't have the resources necessary for their studies. She had a very special place in her heart for the sick and was a great defender of the homeless. She was always helping someone obtain a lot and construct their own home.

Died August 10, 2003

When asked, "Where are you going?" her prompt response was: "I have to fulfill the mission God entrusted to me." This saying was a thread woven into her philosophy of life and this conviction permitted her to hear the call of God to a consecrated religious life and to respond with fidelity and creativity to the needs of the poor, of her family, of the Congregation and of all society.

So great was her determination that she fought against her own death. She always chose life. Even knowing the gravity of her health situation, she believed that she would be able to overcome. She surprised medical science itself, which wasn't able to explain her living these last six years.

Sister Glória, you were and always will be a strong presence in our lives. Thank you for the

36 years of faithful prophetic stance in our Congregation. At this moment we are certain that you are with Jesus, resurrected and alive.

Because of this, with complete confidence we ask that you intercede for your family, friends, Congregation and all whom you loved and defended so well. Amen. Alleluia.

*"To live in the hearts
of those we leave behind,
is to not die."*

(Opening statement at the Funeral Mass on August 10, 2003 in Santa Helena Church at 9:30 p.m. Glória was buried that same night around midnight in the local cemetery. The 7th Day Mass will be on Saturday, August 16th at 7:00 p.m. in Santa Helena.)