

# Alleluia!

## Sister Lorraine Russell, OSF



Sister Lorraine Russell was born in Joliet, Illinois on June 20, 1925, to James and Louise Connors Russell. She was the only daughter and favorite sister of her three brothers, Richard, James and Thomas. Baptized at Sacred Heart Church in Joliet, Lorraine graduated from Sacred Heart Grade School and St. Francis Academy.

Lorraine began her postulancy on September 7, 1943, "to serve God in the best possible way", as she stated on her entrance form. The next August she entered the novitiate and was given the name Sister James Marie, a name she used until after the Second Vatican Council, when she returned to her baptismal name. Sister Lorraine made her first profession of vows on August 12, 1946. From early on, Lorraine was known for her sense of humor, her playfulness and her ability to make light of any situation. She once wrote that she wondered if Sister Anacleta cringed "when, after ushering me out of the Academy, she looked up and found me in the Novitiate?"

Being an educator was Sister Lorraine's life's work. She began her career at Corpus Christi in Columbus, Ohio, teaching 75 third graders and spent 35 years teaching in schools in Ohio and Illinois. Almost half of those years were spent here in Joliet at the Cathedral of St. Raymond and Holy Family Grade Schools and at her Alma Mater, St. Francis Academy. Sister Lorraine was always a creative teacher, using projects and field trips to reinforce classroom lessons. In a reference for her, Sister Ann James once wrote that she "was a fun-loving person whose personality cajoles her students into using their intelligence, time and energy profitably."

Sister Lorraine had many good friends and she was a staunch supporter of her friends. She was even known to write to public figures such as Chicago's Mayor Jane Byrne and Oprah Winfrey. One of her disappointments was that Oprah never answered the letter in which she invited her to feature our Motherhouse on her program.

After retiring from the classroom in 1982, Sister Lorraine spent eight years ministering to her Sisters, first as Director of Enrichment at the Motherhouse and then as

administrator of the Sisters' residence at St. Francis Academy. Her sense of fun, play and adventure was put to good use. Of course there were many field trips, even airplane rides for the Sisters at the Joliet Park District Airport.

When St. Francis Academy closed in 1990, Sister Lorraine moved to the Motherhouse. She again became an educator as she taught and assisted many adults in receiving their GED, taught at the Cornerstone Center and in the CABEL program. Even when her health began to fail, she continued to minister as a tutor at the Motherhouse, until she moved to Our Lady of Angels in 1999.

Through all of this, Lorraine never lost her sense of humor. After her Golden Jubilee she wrote, "I know the Good Lord loves clowns. Certainly, He has smiled on me all these years....I once read, 'The most wasted of all days is that in which we have not laughed.' Therefore, I try to make my community laugh....I hope people will remember me that way....I hope everyone I meet will have a smile upon her face." A few months ago, Sister Lorraine, fully understanding the consequences, refused dialysis. She lived her final days putting smiles on the faces of all she met. Then, on the evening of October 8, surrounded by members of her family and her community, with a smile on her face, she peacefully went home to her God.

Sister Lorraine, we thank you for your years with us, your ministry and especially for putting smiles on our faces. As you play and clown before the Lord, continue to remember us, your family, your friends and your Franciscan Sisters. Amen. Alleluia!

**Sister Lorraine Russell OSF**  
**20 June 1925 - 8 October 2000**

*Born:* June 20, 1925 Joliet, Illinois  
*Parents:* James and Louise (Connors) Russell  
*Entered From:* Sacred Heart Parish, Joliet, Illinois  
*Postulancy:* September 7, 1943  
*Novitiate:* August 12, 1944  
*Profession:* August 12, 1946  
*Entered New Life:* Sunday, October 8, 2000, at Our Lady of Angels at 8:45 p.m.

**Ministry History**

1946 - 1949 Teacher, Grade 3, Corpus Christi, Columbus, Ohio  
 1949 - 1950 Teacher, Grades 3, St. Mary, DesPlaines, Illinois  
 1950 - 1954 Teacher, Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, St. Joseph, Freeport, Illinois  
 1954 - 1955 Teacher, Grades 5, 6, St. Michael, Sigel, Illinois  
 1955 - 1956 Teacher, Grades 5, 6, Corpus Christi, Columbus, Ohio  
 1956 - 1957 Teacher, Grades 7, 8, Marybrook Academy, Maumee, Ohio  
 1957 - 1959 Teacher, Grade 7, St. Mary, Columbus, Ohio  
 1959 - 1960 Teacher, Grade 7, St. Francis de Sales, Toledo, Ohio  
 1960 - 1962 Teacher, Grade 8, Immaculate Conception, Columbus, Ohio  
 1962 - 1966 Teacher, Grade 8, St. Raymond, Joliet, Illinois  
 1966 - 1967 Teacher, Grade 8, St. Mary, DesPlaines, Illinois  
 1967 - 1970 Teacher, Grade 8, St. Rita, Aurora, Illinois  
 1970 - 1974 Principal and Teacher, Holy Family, Joliet, Illinois  
 1974 - 1982 Teacher, Social Studies, St. Francis Academy, Joliet, Illinois  
 1982 - 1985 Director of Enrichment, Motherhouse, Joliet, Illinois  
 1984 - 1990 Administrator, St. Francis Academy Residence, Joliet, Illinois  
 1990 - 1997 Adult Education, Renaissance & Cornerstone Centers, Joliet, Illinois  
 1997 - 1999 Tutor, Motherhouse, Joliet, Illinois  
 1999 - 2000 Retired, Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, Illinois

*Wake:* Wednesday, October 11, 2000, 2 - 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  
*Wake Service:* Wednesday, October 11, 2000, 4:30 p.m., Our Lady of Angels  
*Mass of Christian Burial:* Wednesday, October 11, 2000, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels  
*Burial:* Thursday, October 12, 2000; leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m.  
 to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL

*Interment* S8-L335-G3, Resurrection Cemetery

*Survived by:* Brothers: Richard (Susan), James (Agnes), Thomas (Grace) and many nieces and nephews.

**Rest in Peace, Sister Lorraine**