



Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

Late in the evening of February 22, 2013, drawn by the powers of Heaven, with God's wisdom to guide her, God's hand to guard her, and the way to God lying before her, our sister, Rosemary, took leave of those whom she loved in this life and readied herself to proclaim the ancient words that would herald her entrance into eternal life: *Thagann chun cinn agam inniu* - "I arise today."

From the day of her birth, on June 30, 1935, Rosemary took great delight in surprising others. Joined by her beloved twin brother, Robert, she truly amazed her unsuspecting parents, Michael and Mary Agnes (Mulligan) Small as only twins can do. As the treasured daughter of first generation Irish immigrants, Rosemary was baptized at St. Leo's Parish, dedicated to the Trinity, and entrusted to the care of Mary, Queen of Ireland. Full of wonder and curiosity, she possessed a keen intellect, a gentle sense of humor, a kind heart and a determined spirit. Welcoming the birth of her dear sister Nancy, she enthusiastically assumed the role of lifelong "big sister" and readily embraced the values of her faith-filled, devoted and hard-working family. Growing up in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago's south side in the aftermath of the Great Depression, Rosemary's childhood was lived amidst the uncertainties and insecurities of a world at war. Ever mindful of her own Irish heritage and immigrant roots, she learned from an early age to be attentive to issues of justice and human dignity. Making the most of every opportunity made available to her at Sacred Heart Parish, Rosemary attached herself with great affection to the Joliet Franciscan Sisters who fostered in her a growing sense of her own vocation to religious life.

At the age of thirteen, Rosemary set the course for her future as a Sister of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate. Enrolling at St. Francis Academy in Joliet in the Fall of 1949, she became an aspirant at "the Prep," where she came to know lifelong friends and companions, some of whom would still be present at her side 65 years later as her final hours came to pass. Entering the Postulancy on September 2, 1952, Rosemary was received into the Novitiate on August 13, 1953, and given the name of Sister M. Robert Therese. Professing her first vows two years later on August 12, 1955, she invested herself whole-heartedly in community life with her Sisters. Continuing her undergraduate studies in history and completing her years in initial formation, she professed her final vows on August 13, 1958. Possessing an unparalleled passion for teaching and learning, she creatively engaged the imaginations of her students and exemplified a rare ability for setting young hearts and minds on fire with visions of a future full of hope. Transitioning from the role of teacher to that of principal, Rosemary's abilities for administrative leadership and institutional innovation continued to be demonstrated as she moved into positions of ever-increasing levels of responsibility in higher education. Elected by her Sisters in 1976 and again in 1988 and 1992, she served on the Governing Board of the Congregation for ten years. During those years, she contributed greatly to the vitality of the Congregation, the direction of its sponsored institutions and to the mentoring of a new generation of religious and lay leaders. In 1998, she became the Vice-President of Mission Integration and Ministry at the University of St. Francis. Informed and influenced by the Irish wisdom that "*you'll never plough a field by turning it over in your mind,*" Rosemary's way of proceeding gave visible expression to the three practical and profoundly spiritual convictions that oriented her life: "*When one says 'yes,' a totality evolves;*" "*I can, therefore, I must;*" and "*I am a student of life.*"

Alleluia!



Sister Rosemary Small, OSF

Enriched by her years of graduate study and ongoing research at the College of St. Francis, the University of Illinois-Urbana, Washington University, the University of Notre Dame, Loyola University-Chicago, the University of Chicago, the Newberry Library and Misericordia College, Rosemary was known and admired for her integrated repertoire of knowledge and experience. A formidable interpreter of the "signs of the times," she was truly a renaissance woman whose grasp of history, politics, religion and education enabled her to engage others in meaningful dialogue. Tireless in her countless efforts to infuse Franciscan spirituality and the charism of Mother Alfred Moes into all of her ministerial undertakings, Rosemary repeatedly found ways of identifying unmet needs and "putting in place something where previously there had been nothing."

In her early forties, assailed without warning by the reality she later named "The Invader," Rosemary did everything in her power to set limits on the imposing presence of multiple sclerosis that made its unwelcomed way into so many aspects of her life. Giving new meaning to the virtues of fortitude and resiliency, she boldly and strategically outwitted "The Invader" when she could, and when she couldn't, with prayerful protest, patience and endurance, she privately negotiated some measure of peace.

Sharing with Francis and Clare the experience of living with bodily limitations due to illness and disability, Rosemary steadfastly believed that her life was in the hands of God. Trusting that she was held securely, Rosemary was brave in times of trial when crosses – expected and unexpected – were laid upon her shoulders; wearied, yet resolute, she climbed mountains and crossed chasms; when hope scarcely shined through the darkness, she followed the beam of light she knew to be God's grace. Giving the gift of joy to all who cared for her, Rosemary navigated through the storms of life and survived the sadness of dreams deferred. Surrounded by friends worthy of the name, she was quietly close to all those whom she loved, yet closer still to God whom she sought with all her heart.

Years ago, when asked how one continues to move forward into an unknown future with confidence, Rosemary responded simply and straightforwardly: "*Seek the face of God.*" Taking to heart her words and witness, may we go forward in faith, hope and love, giving abundant thanks to the Holy Trinity for graciously sharing with us the gift of Rosemary, the undaunted seeker who now beholds the face of God in glory, our Sister and dear friend whose life and legacy we celebrate today. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Sister Rosemary Small, OSF

June 30, 1935 — February 22, 2013

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| <i>Born:</i> | June 30, 1935 |
| <i>Parents:</i> | Michael Small and Mary Agnes (Mulligan) Small |
| <i>Postulancy:</i> | September 2, 1952 |
| <i>Novitiate:</i> | August 13, 1953 |
| <i>First Profession:</i> | August 12, 1955 |
| <i>Final Profession:</i> | August 13, 1958 |
| <i>Entered New Life:</i> | February 22, 2013 |

Ministry History

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| 1955-1960 | Teacher: Grade 2, St. Pascal, Chicago, Illinois |
| 1960-1961 | Teacher: Grades 2, St. John the Baptist, Joliet, Illinois |
| 1961-1962 | Teacher: Grade 2, St. Mary, Des Plaines, Illinois |
| 1962-1965 | Teacher: Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, St. Edward, Ashland, Ohio |
| 1965-1966 | Teacher: Grade 6, St. Raymond, Joliet |
| 1966-1967 | Teacher: Grade 8, Sacred Heart, Hubbard Woods |
| 1967-1968 | Teacher: Grade 8, St. Raymond, Joliet |
| 1968-1969 | Education Department, College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1969-1970 | Teacher: Grade 8, Sacred Heart, Winnetka, Illinois |
| 1970-1976 | Principal: St. Matthew, Champaign, Illinois |
| 1976-1978 | Area Coordinator, College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1978-1979 | Consultant to Governing Board/Faculty, Staff: College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1979-1980 | Consultant to Governing Board/Assistant to V.P. Academic Affairs, College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1980-1981 | Assistant to Vice President, College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1981-1983 | Director of Undergraduate Studies, College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1983-1984 | Assistant to Vice President/Dean of College, College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1984-1985 | Assistant to Vice President for Academic Affairs, College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1985-1988 | Assistant Professor of Education, College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1988-1996 | Councilor/Governing Board Administrator, Motherhouse, Joliet |
| 1996-1998 | Adjunct Assistant Professor/Scholar in Residence, College of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 1998-2010 | Vice-President for Mission Integration, University of St. Francis, Joliet |
| 2010-2011 | Co-Director: 145 Anniversary Celebrations |
| 2011-2013 | Community Service: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home |

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| <i>Wake:</i> | Wednesday, February 27, 2013, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet |
| <i>Prayer Service:</i> | Wednesday, February 27, 2013, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet |
| <i>Mass of Christian Burial:</i> | Wednesday, February 27, 2013, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet |
| <i>Burial:</i> | Thursday, February 28, 2013, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois |
| <i>Interment:</i> | Section 8, Lot 362, Grave 12, Resurrection Cemetery |
| <i>Predeceased by:</i> | By her parents, Michael Small and Mary Agnes (Mulligan) Small and her twin brother, Robert. |
| <i>Survived by:</i> | Her sister, Nancy (Joseph) Abelard and numerous nieces and nephews. |

Rest in Peace, Sister Rosemary