

Sister M. Harriet Tezak, O.S.F. 781



Born: February 18, 1906
Parents: Joseph and Frances (Zuzek) Tezak
Entered from: St. Joseph Parish, Joliet, IL
Postulancy: January 6, 1926
Novitiate: August 12, 1926
Profession: August 12, 1928

Died: Friday, May 14, 1999 at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home,
Joliet, IL at 3:35 a.m.

Ministry:

1928 - 1948 St. Joseph, Joliet, IL, Grades 1 thru 6
1948 - 1950 St. Joseph, Elgin, IL, Grades 1, 2
1950 - 1952 St. Stephen, Streator, IL, Grade 2
1952 - 1953 Ss. Peter and Paul, Chicago, IL, Grade 5
1953 - 1957 St. Denis, Benton, MO, Grades 1, 2, 3
1957 - 1958 Holy Family, Cleveland, OH, Grade 5
1958 - 1961 St. Mary, Mt. Vernon, IL, Grade 1
1961 - 1964 Our Lady of Grace, Muskegon, MI, Grades 1, 2
1964 - 1966 St. Michael, Sigel, IL, Grades 1, 2
1966 - 1975 St. Paul, Joliet, IL, Grade 4
1975 - 1976 St. Mary, Fairfield, AL, Substitute Teacher
1976 - 1978 St. Rita, Aurora, IL, Librarian, Learning Center
1978 - 1979 St. Paul, Joliet, IL, Tutor
1979 - 1992 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Tutor at St. Francis Reading Center,
CCD teacher at St. Bernard Parish, Joliet
1992 - 1999 Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL, Retired

Wake: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL, Monday, May 17, 1999
2-7 p.m. with prayer service at 4:30 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL
Monday, May 17, 1999 at 7:00 p.m.

Burial: Tuesday, May 18, 1999 leaving Our Lady of Angels
at 9:00 a.m. to St. Joseph Cemetery, Joliet, IL
St. Mary Section, L-130, G6

Survived by: her sister Elizabeth Karzis (Crosslake, MN) and nieces and nephews

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

Sister Harriet Tezak was born in Joliet, Illinois on February 18, 1906 to Joseph and Frances (Zuzek) Tezak. She was baptized Julia Frances at St. Joseph Church in Joliet. She had three brothers: Joseph, John and Francis (two died in infancy) and four sisters: Ann, Frances, Rose and Elizabeth. Julia was the youngest child in the family. They attended the parish school at St. Joseph's.

From her earliest childhood, Julie felt a special call to religious life. When Julia was nineteen, she was interviewed by Mother Vincent who asked Sister Secunda Govednik to help her to prepare to enter the convent. On January 6, 1926, Julia became a postulant with the Joliet Franciscan Sisters. On August 12, 1926, Julia received the habit as a novice and was given the new name of Sister Mary Harriet.

Because several of the young women from St. Joseph Parish had recently joined the Franciscans the new pastor, Rev. John Plevnik, asked that at least one of them be assigned to his parish. Following her first profession of vows on August 12, 1928, Sister Harriet was assigned to her home parish where she taught for twenty years. Sister Harriet continued to serve as an elementary educator in various schools in Missouri, Ohio, Michigan, Alabama and Illinois for thirty more years. During that time she was also active in teaching religion to the children who went to the public schools in Joliet, Rockdale and Minooka.

Sister Harriet's gifts as an educator are remembered by her thousands of former students. In 1973, St. Paul the Apostle School in Joliet honored her publicly for her outstanding abilities and her "kind, gentle firmness that the children so readily respond to." She is remembered by many as their favorite teacher. She was described as "respectful, charitable, forgiving, peaceable, industrious, patient and ready to help out." After completing fifty years as an educator, Sister Harriet continued her ministry as a tutor and as a catechist until she retired to Our Lady of Angels in 1992.

Sister Harriet also had a loving presence in being with the sick in the hospital and with the dying. Her presence was comforting and reassuring. She also spent time with crafts, crocheting and visiting her friends.

As her strength failed, the Sisters and others of her friends and family supported Sister Harriet. They prayed by her bedside and in the very early predawn hours of Friday May 14, 1999, the day after the Church celebrated the Ascension of Jesus into heaven, Sister Harriet peacefully returned to the arms of her loving God.

Sister Harriet, we are grateful for your kind and compassionate ways of being with children and of being with us. We ask that you continue to nurture the love of Jesus in each of us, your family, your friends, your former students and your Franciscan Sisters as we recall your loving ways. May you enjoy the peace and love of Jesus forever. Amen. Alleluia.

