

Sister Lillian Ujka, O.S.F. (Dolorosa)

742

Born: November 2, 1923

Parents: Frank F. and Frances (Suchman) Ujka

Entered from: St. Ludmilla, Chicago, IL

Postulancy: September 5, 1939

Novitiate: August 12, 1940

Profession: August 12, 1942



Died: Saturday, January 4, 1997 at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home at approximately 3:50 p.m.

Ministry:

1942 - 1949 Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Chicago, IL, Kindergarten and Grades 1, 2
1949 - 1952 St. Denis, Benton, MO, Grades 1, 2, 3
1952 - 1955 Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Chicago, IL, Grade 1
1955 - 1957 St. Procop, Cleveland, OH, Grade 1
1957 - 1963 Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Chicago, IL, Grade 1
1963 - 1967 St. Ludmilla, Chicago, IL, Principal, Grade 8
1967 - 1973 St. Mary, DesPlaines, IL, Principal
1973 - 1997 Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Local Coordinator for the sister residents and member of the OLA administrative team

Wake: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL, Tuesday, January 7, 1997
2-7:00 p.m. with a prayer service at 4:30 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL, Tuesday, January 7, 1997 at 7 p.m.

Burial: Wednesday, January 8, 1997 leaving Our Lady of Angels 9:30 a.m.
to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL, S8-L352-G8

Survived by: her sister Mary Ujka of Hickory Hills, IL
and her brothers and sisters-in-law: Joseph (Lillian) Ujka
of Orland Park, IL and Frank (Jean) Ujka of Addison, IL
and nieces and nephews

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

Sister Lillian Ujka was born in Chicago, Illinois on November 2, 1923, the first child of Frank and Frances Ujka. She was baptized at St. Ludmilla's Church. As a child, Lillian helped to care for her younger sister Mary whose health was affected by polio, as well as her younger brothers Joseph and Frank. Lillian was grateful for the love and care of her family. She admired her father's "gentle discipline and strong love."

As an aspirant, Lillian attended St. Francis Academy, and became a postulant with the Joliet Franciscan Sisters on September 5, 1939. Upon entering the novitiate, she was given the name of Sister Mary Dolorosa, but later resumed her Baptismal name. In those early days Sister Eulalia identified qualities that would be typical of Sister Lillian for years to come: "devout, sincere, obedient, charitable, conscientious, and loved by all."

In her beginning years of ministry Sister Lillian taught the primary grades, teaching children to read, to pray and to live in service of others. For her dissertation topic at DePaul University, Sister Lillian wrote on "The Effects of the Liturgy in Changing a Child's Values." Sister Ivan served as a strong mentor for Lillian in these early years.

In 1973, when asked to come to Our Lady of Angels as Coordinator for the Sisters, Sister Lillian responded in a spirit of love and service, which she continued to give for 23 years. Lillian lavished her gifts of celebration, hospitality and coordination. When times were tense or trying, Lillian would suddenly announce, "Let's have a party." and from the storeroom of treasures came treats and trinkets to lighten people's hearts and spirits. Each season brought its special celebrations, but Christmas was always her favorite. Each day approaching Christmas was carefully planned, following a six month preparation of gifts and wrapping for each of those in her care.

In describing her life in service of the sisters, Lillian wrote: "Truthfully, I have grown! My Sisters teach me peace, joy, and faithfulness. They are bearers of Christ to me. They are creative and alive--waiting for their God. And so I continue my journey of life through the wilderness, not knowing what the path ahead may bring, but richer for the experience of being touched by all of my Sisters at OLA as I seek to see the face of God in each of them."

When Sister Lillian was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, she continued working as much as her energy allowed, valuing each day as a new gift of God. In her last illness she found joy and meaning in helping Christmas to happen. As the Christmas season was drawing to a close, surrounded by her Sisters and family, Sister Lillian was drawn to see God face to face, just before the Eucharistic Liturgy of the Manifestation of Jesus began in OLA's chapel. Perhaps the question of her liturgical dissertation flashed before her mind: "What gift can I bring to the Christ Child?" ...and she gave her all.

Sister Lillian, you taught us how to give constantly to others. May you now pray for us your friends, your family and your Franciscan Sisters, that we may be generous in the service of others. May the joy and love you brought to so many shine as a star for all eternity. Amen. Alleluia.

