



Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

At sunset, on Friday evening, April 17, 2009, the soul of our Sr. Carolita took flight for the kingdom of heaven. It was time. Outside the bedroom, her beloved robins and cardinals urged her on with their evening song. At her bedside, Sr. Carol Jander, one of her students from her early years of teaching, tenderly held her hand – representing the hundreds of ‘little hands’ which Sr. Carolita had lovingly held over the course of 55 years. Taking to heart the words of Jesus, *“I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven ...”* (Mt 18:3), she died as she had lived.

Born on May 30, 1924, Mary Dilla was welcomed into life by her cherished parents, Karol Dilla and Mary Lehman. Over the course of her many years, she considered herself blessed to have not only six loving brothers and one sister, but wonderful in-laws, and many nieces and nephews who brought so much joy to her life.

From childhood on, Mary Dilla was drawn to religious life. Her special love of the Blessed Mother was shared by her family and neighbors as well as the priests, sisters and parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish on Huron Street. Nurtured by an immigrant faith that was tested and true, she embraced her Slovak cultural roots and her religious heritage with joy and reverence. Entering the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate as a postulant on September 4, 1940, she wrote a letter to Mother Thomasine nine months later in which she said: *“My one desire consists of leading the life of a real Franciscan. It seems to me the greatest joy anyone can give to God is to consecrate oneself to Him wholeheartedly.”* And so Sr. Carolita did, all the days of her life.

Throughout her life in ministry, Sr. Carolita was regarded as a creative, dedicated and “unforgettable” first and second grade teacher. From Columbus to Worthington to Chicago to Rock Island to Mansfield to Norridge, she touched the lives of hundreds and hundreds of children by entrusting them with the three greatest gifts she had to offer: the love of God, the love of reading and the love of life. As an exemplar of Franciscan joy and simplicity, Sr. Carolita set the pace. Inevitably, anyone over the age

Alleluia!



Sister M. Carolita Dilla, OSF

of eight had a hard time keeping up with her. Even in her final years, while experiencing diminishment in her own body and mind, the twinkle in her eye, the smile on her face, and the lilt in her voice as she said *“Ohhhhh, honey”* revealed an inimitable childlike spirit. Inspired throughout her life by the words of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Sr. Carolita truly embraced the wisdom of *The Little Way*: *“Seeing that it is enough ... to give oneself wholly, like a child, into the arms of the good God... rejoicing to be little because ‘only children, and those who are like them, will be admitted to the heavenly banquet’.”*

Among her few possessions, one of Sr. Carolita’s most treasured remembrances was a small clay form that looked like a sandal from a pilgrimage to a Marian apparition site in the war-torn region of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mindful of Sr. Carolita’s great devotion to Mary and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, it seems fitting to recall that less than a month ago on the Feast of the Annunciation, one of the three visionaries of Medjugorje, Mirjana Soldo, is said to have received another message from Our Lady which contained the following words: *“Dear children! In this time of spring, when everything is awakening from the winter sleep, may you also awaken your souls with prayer so that they may be ready to receive the light of the risen Jesus. Little children, may He draw you closer to His Heart so that you may become open to eternal life...”* Sister Carolita, as you now receive the light of the Risen Jesus and are drawn forever into the Heart of God, we thank you for the gift of your life and your childlike openness to the mystery of God’s eternal love. May you rest in peace.

Amen. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sister M. Carolita Dilla, OSF

May 30, 1924 — April 17, 2009

<i>Born:</i>	May 30, 1924
<i>Parents:</i>	Charles and Mary (Lehman) Dilla
<i>Postulancy:</i>	September 4, 1940
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 12, 1941
<i>First Profession:</i>	August 12, 1943
<i>Final Profession:</i>	August 12, 1946
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	April 17, 2009

Ministry History

1943-1944	Student: College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois
1944-1953	Teacher: Grades 1, 2 ; Corpus Christi; Columbus, Ohio
1953-1954	Teacher: Grade 2; St. Michael; Worthington, Ohio
1954-1963	Teacher: Grade 1; Sacred Heart; Englewood, Illinois
April 1963	Teacher: Grade 1; St. Boniface; Chicago, Illinois
1963-1965	Teacher: Grade 1; St. Mary Magdalene, Columbus, Ohio
1965-1968	Teacher: Grades 1 & 2; St. Mary, Rock Island, Illinois
1968-1984	Teacher: Grade 1; St. Peter, Mansfield, Ohio
1984-1998	Teacher: Grade 1; Divine Savior, Norridge, Illinois
1998-2009	Community Service: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, Illinois

<i>Wake:</i>	Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Prayer Service:</i>	Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Mass of Christian Burial:</i>	Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
<i>Burial:</i>	Wednesday, April 22, 2009, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL
<i>Interment:</i>	Section 8, Lot 7, Grave 11, Resurrection Cemetery
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	Her parents, Karol and Mary (Lehman) Dilla; her brothers, John, Charles, Aloysius, Stephen, Father Frank and sister, Theresa
<i>Survived by:</i>	Many nieces and nephews

Rest in Peace, Sister Carolita