

Sisters of St. Francis

of Mary Immaculate

On the afternoon of February 8, 2023, our sister, Janet Rieden, was surrounded with the loving presence of family, Sisters and dear friends, as the final hours of her Christian journey were drawing near. Conformed throughout her life to the Word of God, it was most fitting that the Gospel reading for the day (Matthew: 25:6-7) heralded the parable of the wise virgin who kept her lamp trimmed and burning, never growing weary until her work was done.

In 1934, as the New Year dawned in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, Catherine (Hentges) and Peter J. Rieden eagerly awaited the anticipated birth of their first child. Among the great joys of the holiday season was the arrival of their infant daughter, Janet Marie, on January 2, the ninth day of Christmas!

Together with her beloved brother, Gordon, Janet was raised in the wonder and beauty of life on the southern shore of Lake Winnebago. From an early age, she embraced the love of learning and the value that her family placed on education. Influenced by the example of the Sisters of St. Agnes, her teachers at St. Patrick's Parish school and later, at St. Mary's Springs High School, one of the first co-educational Catholic high schools in Wisconsin, Janet was drawn to the vocation of teaching. In the Fall of 1952, she made her way to Joliet, Illinois, to attend the College of St. Francis where she met the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate. It was there that she was drawn to the charism of the congregation through the spirit and life of the sisters who were her mentors and her classmates. On September 6, 1954, while continuing her undergraduate studies, Janet became a postulant with the Joliet Franciscans. The following year, on August 13, 1955, she was received into the novitiate and given her religious name, Sister Mary Jonathan. In 1957, she graduated from the College of St. Francis, professed her first vows, and started teaching fifth grade at St. Peter's Parish in Mansfield, Ohio. The following year, Sr. Jonathan embarked on what would become her lifelong commitment to the integral formation of young women and men through the ministry of Catholic secondary education and the cultivation of excellence in teaching and learning in the company of valued colleagues and co-workers.

Alleluia!



Sister Janet Rieden, OSF

In 1963, much attention was being given to the call to mission, usually in faraway places where palm trees flourished in the sand. Sr. Jonathan enthusiastically responded to the call, and though her mission placement had plenty of palm trees and sand, passports and visas were not required. Arriving in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, she was welcomed warmly by Sr. Conradine, OSF (Marie Schramko), the principal for girls at Cardinal Gibbons High School, founded in 1961. There, they would remain together "in mission" for the next fifty-three years, all thanks to Sr. Conradine's urgent appeal to Mother M. Borromeo: "Please send someone who can handle seniors!" True to the vision of Mother Alfred Moes, they shared in creating something where there had been nothing.

During Sr. Janet's initial years of teaching at CGHS, she also multi-tasked during five summer sessions and obtained a Master of Arts degree in English Literature from Loyola University - Chicago. Though Western European literature and the History of Art were among her favorite subjects to teach, she was truly a creative and resourceful renaissance woman, ready to take on the challenges of any and all disciplines in the Liberal Arts and Sciences. By the time she concluded her ministry at CGHS in 2016, she had taught almost every subject, served as moderator of most of the major clubs, and, at least up until 2007, she personally had known and educated each one of the 10,437 graduating seniors as well! A most worthy recipient of the Golden Apple Award for excellence in teaching, Sr. Janet contributed enormously to the growth and development of one of the top twenty-five Catholic high Schools in Florida. According to Sr. Janet, when it came to life-giving experiences, "nothing beat teaching!"

Sister Janet Rieden, OSF
January 2, 1934—February 8, 2023

A gifted Franciscan woman, who loved nature, Sr. Janet was fond of plants and gardening of all sorts. She had a particular affection for orchids and the ways in which they revealed God's splendor. An avid reader and a faith-filled story teller in her own right, she humbly welcomed the Word that took root in her heart (James 1:21) knowing its power and its promise.

Returning to Joliet in 2016, Sr. Janet took up residence at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, in the company of Sr. Marie Schramko and many other Sisters with whom she shared life, prayer and community during her final years. Amidst

increasing physical diminishment and limited mobility, Sr. Janet maintained her gentle sense of humor and her ongoing concern for others. With patience, wisdom and courage, she remained confident in the love of the Holy One who called her by name and attentive to the outpouring of God's graces throughout her life in mission.

May Sr. Janet Rieden's legacy of generous self-giving and loving gratitude continue to inspire and guide us in creating and sustaining communities of hope. Alleluia! Alleluia!

*Thou who hast given so much to me,
give one thing more, a grateful heart.
George Herbert (1593-1633) "Gratefulness"*

<i>Born:</i>	January 2, 1934
<i>Parents:</i>	Peter J. Rieden and Catherine Hentges
<i>Postulancy:</i>	September 6, 1954
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 13, 1955
<i>First Profession:</i>	August 12, 1957
<i>Final Profession:</i>	August 12, 1961
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	February 8, 2023

Ministry History

1957-1958	Teacher: Grade 5, St. Peter, Mansfield, Ohio
1958-1960	Teacher: Freshman Homeroom. Spanish, English, Religion, Modern Language Club, Sodality Core, Creative Writing, St. Francis Academy, Joliet, Illinois
1960-1963	Freshman Homeroom, Religion, Guidance, English, Spanish, Spanish Club, Assistant Thespian Moderator, Assistant Lamp Staff Moderator, Senior Class Moderator, Speech, Journalism, school newspaper, SS. Peter and Paul, Chicago, Illinois
1963-2005	Teacher: English, Religion, School Paper, Journalism, National Honor Society, Advanced Composition, INSIGHT, Student Council, Senior Homeroom, World Literature, Cardinal Gibbons High School, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
2005-2009	Department Head/Teacher: English, Cardinal Gibbons High School, Fort Lauderdale
2010-2016	Department Head Emeritus/Teacher: History of Art, Cardinal Gibbons High School, Fort Lauderdale
2016-2022	Community Service: Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet
2023	Ministry of Prayer and Presence: Villa Franciscan Place, Joliet

<i>Interment:</i>	Section 8, Lot 345, Grave 4, Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	Her parents, Peter J. Rieden and Catherine Hentges
<i>Survived by:</i>	Her brother, Goran Rieden and friends Pat Burke and Brother Michael Brickman, CSC

Rest in Peace, Sister Janet!