In Memoriam

They whom we love and lost are no longer where they were before. They are now wherever we are.

St. John Chrysostom

• Sister Wilma Marie Broemmel, OP
• Sister M. Lucille Mertes, OP
• Sister Ann Catherine Radosevic, OP
• Sister M. Dominica Brennan, OP
• Sister Elizabeth Ann Bedinghaus, OP
• Sister Marie Dominic Moore, OP
• Sister M. Roselita Holthaus, OP
• Sister Kathryn Edward Knecht, OP
• Sister Maxine Riker, OP
• Sister M. Joseph Weigand, OP
• Sister M. Sharon Wiertz, OP
• Sister M. Carolyn Englum, OP

November 2015 • Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois
Sister Wilma Marie (Sister M. Pius) died on the first Sunday of Advent, the season of waiting. When welcoming her home Sister Judith Hilbing said “Sister Wilma Marie can teach us about 98 years of serious waiting.”

Sister Wilma Marie “had times when she was sharp enough to play cards; and days when she confused time and place and friends,” but through it all she remained a peaceful person. “Her peacefulness was always the constant container for her goodness and kindness,” Sister Judith said. “Some of her last conscious words were a thank you to the nurses for their loving care of her.”

Sister Kathleen Gallagher noted that on the day she died “Whatever darkness or fright she felt was taken away. She had made it. Now all of her phrases were those of joy, all of her verbs were of heavenly action; all of her nouns were safe, flourishing, and comfortable. And as the musician she has always been, she could now rejoice with joyful song. We are listening for her voice and share in her heavenly joy.”

Father Steven Janoski, was befriended by Sister Wilma Marie when he was a young pastor. At her funeral he said that she was “a beautiful soul” who understood what Jesus meant when he preached that to be fully alive “we must die to ourselves and serve God by serving others.”

2015 was to have been Sister Wilma Marie’s 60th Jubilee of religious profession. Through those years, whether she ministered in the classroom, hospital, or library, she was a gentle reminder of unending grace. Ω
Sister M. Lucille Mertes, OP

One wonder of Sister Lucille’s life was that someone who began life so precariously could live nearly to her 100th birthday. She was the fifth child in a family of seven born to Mary Meyer and Nicholas Mertes on a farm two miles east of Wenona, Ill. When she was barely eight Lucille contracted scarlet fever and diphtheria. She lay in a coma for weeks. She was anointed by the priest after the doctor told her parents that she would not live. Then, on Good Friday 1923, Lucille regained consciousness. The doctor predicted that she would be an invalid for the rest of her life, but that is not exactly how things happened!

After high school graduation Lucille had planned to enter the Nauvoo Benedictines and in fact had already been accepted. However, her pastor had a good working relationship with the Springfield Dominican prioress and suggested that she reconsider her choice. Though Lucille had never been to Springfield or seen a Dominican, she felt, as her pastor spoke, that Springfield was where God wanted her to be. So on a rainy Friday, the 13 of July, Lucille Mertes entered this congregation that she served so well for more than 75 years.

Sister Lucille lived a long and holy life. She loved her family and her community. She gave her heart and soul to gardening, spending long hours communing with nature as she cared for the motherhouse grounds.

Sister Lucille became “a sacrament to us,” Sister Francella Vyverman said, adding that she revealed God’s love to us, “A God who loves us and grasps us without wanting to let us go.

“Her face lit up when she saw you and often times, she did not want to let go of your hand when you were leaving. I feel that she grasped God’s hand with the same strong arms of love.”

Born: Lucille Barbara, June 14, 1915
Parents: Nicholas and Mary (Meyers) Mertes
First Profession: August 4, 1936
Perpetual Profession: August 4, 1939
Entered into eternal life: March 10, 2015

MISSIONS:
St. Edward, Chicago, Ill. 1936-1950
St. Joseph, Bradley, Ill. 1950-1956
Our Lady of Grace, Chicago, Ill. 1956-1962
Holy Rosary, Duluth, Minn. 1962-1965
St. Edward, Chicago, Ill. 1965-1968
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield Ill. 1968-2015
Sister Ann Catherine was the oldest of six children born of immigrant Czechoslovakian parents. When first married they settled in Lincoln, Ill., where her father worked in the coal mine. 

Eventually the family moved to Springfield and Ann Catherine was enrolled at Matheny School for the fourth grade. After a year her mother moved the children to St. Patrick’s, even though her father, who was not Catholic, strongly objected. Sister Ann Catherine, in her autobiography stated: “My mother’s faith was strong. During May and October we knelt down each night to pray the family rosary while my Dad looked on.”

Sister Ann Catherine ministered as a teacher, a principal, and in pastoral care. She touched many lives in these years which was evident by all who kept in contact with her.

She loved being in the kitchen cooking and baking. Sister Joan Sorge recalled that when they lived together at Little Flower and had invited guests, “Sister Ann Catherine offered a warm welcome and hospitality, and no one went home empty-handed.”

The motherhouse chapel seemed to be “holy ground” for Sister Ann Catherine. There, in the presence of Jesus, she found strength, peace, and comfort. At the back of her Bible she had written the words: “Not I, but Christ lives in me.”

**Sister Ann Catherine**

Born: Mary Josephine, March 15, 1918
Parents: Anton and Mary (Vlahovich) Radosevic
First Profession: January 3, 1938
Perpetual Profession: January 3, 1941
Entered into eternal life: March 18, 2015

**MISSIONS:**
- St. Mary, East Moline, Ill. 1938-1939
- St. Thomas, Crystal Lake, Ill. 1939-1949
- Cathedral, Springfield, Ill. 1949-1955
- St. Walter, Chicago, Ill. 1955-1957
- SS Peter and Paul, Cary, Ill. 1957-1963
- Sacred Heart, Redlands, Calif. 1963-1978
- St. Vincent De Paul, Peoria, Ill. 1978-1984
- St. Mary, Paris, Ill. 1984-1985
- St. Thomas More, Elgin, Ill. 1985-1987
- St. Agnes, Springfield, Ill. 1987-1989
- Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield, Ill. 2001-2015
Mary Patricia Brennan, fourth child and only daughter of her parents, was born in Galesburg, Ill. From what we were told, she was an answer to her father’s prayer. Her brothers, ages 5, 7, and 10 when she was born, were in awe of the newcomer.

Coming into this world during depression years, Pat learned to appreciate a simple lifestyle with few needs and fewer wants, a practice that endured throughout her life. She served the community in many capacities: teacher, board member, formator, leader, canonist, mission integration animator, and friend.

At Sister Dominica’s homecoming Sister Judith Hilbing said that her “Full and generous life touched each of us in different ways.” And that even at the end of her life she “Reached toward and chose life, always reaching for the more, the potential, the promise, and the miracle around the corner.”

Reflecting on more than fifty years of ministry, Sister Dominica said that her most rewarding years were the 23 she spent in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. She deeply respected and appreciated Archbishop Harry Flynn and enjoyed working with the other staff members, including one who had been her sixth grade student at St. Edward School. Archbishop Flynn said Sister Dominica was one of the greatest blessings in his life.

“Sister Dominica was an extraordinarily talented and intelligent person in whose presence I never felt inadequate by comparison,” Sister Judith Hilbing said, “because she had the remarkable gift of helping the common person to feel confident and competent. This is the gift she gave to me both in her role as prioress general and as the director of mission integration. I am forever grateful.”

Born: Mary Patricia, May 21, 1937
Parents: Thomas and Florence (Buttell) Brennan
First Profession: January 4, 1957
Perpetual Profession: January 4, 1960
Entered into eternal life: March 18, 2015

MISSIONS:
St. Edward, Chicago, Ill. 1957-1959
St. Bernadette, Evergreen Park, Ill. 1959-1960
College of St Theresa (Student) 1960-1961
Little Flower, Springfield, Ill. 1961-1962
Rosary High, Aurora, Ill. 1962-1971
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield Ill. 1971-1989
Providence, Rhode Island (Student) 1989-1990
Ottawa, Ontario (Student) 1990-1992
Archdiocesan Office, St Paul, MN 1992-2008
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield, Ill. 2008-2015

Sister M. Dominica Brennan, OP
Sister Elizabeth Ann Bedinghaus, OP

Born: Anna Geneva, January 3, 1912
Parents: Clement and Elizabeth (Stork) Bedinghaus
First Profession: August 4, 1940
Perpetual Profession: August 4, 1943
Entered into eternal life: April 19, 2015

MISSIONS:
Our Lady of Grace, Chicago, Ill. 1940–1946
St. Paul, Odell, Ill. 1946–1957
Sacred Heart, Pana, Ill. 1957–1961
Our Lady Queen Peace, Bethalto, Ill. 1970–1975
St. Malachy, Rantoul, Ill. 1975–1979
Our lady of Lourdes, Decatur, Ill. 1979–1987
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield, Ill. 1987–2015

Sister Elizabeth Ann was nine years old when her father died, leaving her mother behind to tend the farm and raise eight children on their land near Farmersville, Ill. During the Depression she did her chores on the farm and sought employment wherever she could in order to help her mother. One of those jobs was serving as housekeeper at Cathedral and cooking for Bishop Griffin. When her mother died in 1938 she felt free to enter the convent, following her sisters, Sister M. Sylvester and Sister Ruth Marie.

In the community, as she had done in her family, Sister Elizabeth Ann worked where she was needed: teaching children in schools and in rural confraternity centers, driving with other Sisters into the country, bringing the vibrant colors of faith to children who did not have access to Catholic schools.

“I remember Sister Elizabeth Ann as one of the most agreeable and accommodating Sisters with whom I have ever lived,” Sister Mary Jean Traeger said. “She embraced whatever came with a gentle spirit. My favorite image is that of her sitting in the chapel for Liturgy of the Hours. At the time, she could no longer see to read the prayer and her failed hearing made it difficult for her to make out the words. But as I watched her sit there, I knew that her prayer was strong and attentive, rich colors of faith circling up to God, like the designs in [the chapel] windows.”

Just before Sister Elizabeth Ann died, Sister June Volpe visited and asked her what it was like to live so long. Sister Elizabeth Ann sat up, and, with a smile that lit up her whole face, she answered: "AWESOME!"
Frances Moore was so inspired by her first grade teacher that she came home from school one day proclaiming that she would be a sister when she grew up. For 30 years Sister Marie Dominic ministered in education, pastoral care, and community formation in Peru: in the isolated areas of Lima, Jarpa, and Llanopampa, among people largely ignored by the rest of the world. One of her joys was to reconnect with her friends in Peru in March 2015 when the Sisters celebrated 50 years of presence with the Peruvian people. 

Know by all as “Dominga,” Sister Marie Dominic had a compassionate heart and a listening ear. She loved people, recalled Sister Ann Elizabeth. “They would tell her their stories; she would show where she saw God working in their lives,” she said.

“Dominga was wise and articulate, joyful and creative,” said Sister Judith Hilbing. She was present in Peru during some of the worst violence there, she also “Knew fear and anger—solidarity and forgiveness—courage and reconciliation.”

In 1991 Sister Dominga wrote a poem, A Lament, expressing her anguish and grief over senseless violence and the public execution of a 70-year-old Sister of the Good Shepherd, Sister Aguchita. Here is an excerpt:

In the shaky terror of my unbelief, I believe./ You are, God, stronger than the terror of the night./ Into whose hands I commend my life,/ Into whose death I entrust the future’s risk.

Oh Crucified One, Risen from the dead and living among us still—may you be praised forever. May your enemies one day sit down at your banquet table of peace. And may I, with Aguchita, serve them. Ω

Born: Frances, May 19, 1942
Parents: Frank and Sidney (Cook) Moore
First Profession: June 19, 1962
Perpetual Profession: June 19, 1965
Entered into eternal life: June 26, 2015

MISSIONS:
St. Bernadette, Evergreen Park, Ill. 1962-1964
St. Mary, East Moline, Ill. 1964-1967
Sacred Heart, San Diego, Calif. 1967-1973
Sacred Heart Academy, Springfield, Ill. 1973-1976
Routt, Jacksonville, Ill. 1976-1978
San Borja, Lima, Peru 1978-1979
Mission Center, Llanopampa, Peru 1980-1983
San Borja, Lima, Peru 1983-1989
Maryknoll School of Theology 1989-1991
Casa Domingo, Lima, Peru 1996-1997
Redlands, Calif. 1997-1999
Casa Maria, Lima, Peru 1999-2004
Casa Rosa De Lima, Lima, Peru 2004-2006
Jarpa, Peru 2006-2011
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield, Ill. 2011–2015

Sister Marie Dominic Moore, OP
In the early years of her Dominican life, Sister Roselita taught primary grades in Chicago, Aurora, Springfield, Quincy, and Crystal Lake, Ill. In the 1980s she accompanied single mothers at St. Monica’s Home in Springfield. “After retiring from teaching, I enjoyed being on the ‘adult spectrum,’” she wrote.

Later she embarked on another ministry, visiting the sick. In 2007 she moved to Sacred Heart Convent where she especially enjoyed doing needlework.

Sister Roselita loved people and enjoyed visits with her family and friends, our Dominican Associates, with the nursing staff, and with Cody, the student from Sacred Heart-Griffin who visited her regularly at the Motherhouse. “She was there with her contagious chuckle and an invisible fabric of connections. Those threads brought her joy,” Sister Judith Hilbing recalled.

Sister Roselita “practiced gratitude and fostered simplicity. She grew in communion with herself, others, and God,” Sister Judith said.

In her preaching at the vigil service Sister Rose Marie Riley told us that a few days before she died, Sister Roselita told the nurses that she would soon be going to Jesus. She was heard repeating the name of Jesus. Like Mary Magdalene, Sister Roselita recognized the one who was calling her. “Having spent her life in mystical longing for God, Sister Roselita knew that she was being called home,” Sister Rose Marie said, adding that Sister Roselita’s trust and total acceptance “became her ultimate preaching, a gift to all of us, as she entered into the sacrament of waiting so quietly and peacefully.”Ω
**Sister Kathryn Edward** had a long elementary school teaching career in Chicago, Granite City, and Springfield, Ill. After returning to school herself, she taught high school business classes in Richmond, Mich., and in Aurora, Jacksonville, and Chicago Heights, Ill. In 1997 she became the administrative assistant to the prioress general. She continued in that ministry until 2003.

Jack Henegan, long-time Marian High School staff member, recalled fondly his interactions with Sister Kathryn Edward. He called her “a role model for all of us to take time with the things we do... a role model for all of us on how to care for a friend... and a role model for all of us in how to try new things with an upbeat spirit.” Jack remembered fondly that it was “Sister KE” who brought the Marian High School administration into the computer age, and that she relished and delighted in the opportunity to learn something new.

During the funeral rites Sister Judith Hilbing spoke of Sister Kathryn Edward’s seeming ease that accompanied each of her changes in ministry: “She went from elementary teacher to high school professor, to secretary. She used her accounting skills and human-relation talents. She focused her love on classical music and Marian Catholic High School’s Band. She coordinated mission carnivals and loved traveling.” ♀

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**Born:** Lorene Katherine, December 2, 1923  
**Parents:** Edward and Kathryn (Schmidt) Knecht  
**First Profession:** August 4, 1949  
**Perpetual Profession:** August 4, 1952  
**Entered into eternal life:** July 7, 2015

**MISSIONS:**  
- Our Lady of Grace, Chicago, Ill. 1949-1951  
- Sacred Heart, Granite City, Ill. 1951-1953  
- St. Agnes, Springfield, Ill. 1953-1960  
- St. Augustine, Richmond, Mich. 1961-1966  
- Rosary High, Aurora, Ill. 1966-1972  
- Routt, Jacksonville, Ill. 1972-1976  

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**Sister Kathryn Edward Knecht, OP**
Sister Maxine Riker, OP

Born: Janice Maxine, January 14, 1942
Parents: Kurt and Frances (Clarke) Riker
First Profession: June 19, 1962
Perpetual Profession: June 19, 1965
Entered into eternal life: July 19, 2015

MISSIONS:
- St. Malachy, Rantoul, Ill. 1962-1966
- St. John, Carrollton, Ill. 1966-1968
- St. Edward, Chicago, Ill. 1968-1970
- St. Edward, Chicago, Ill. 1971-1971
- St. Anne, St. Ann, Ill. 1971-1974
- St. Vincent De Paul, Peoria, Ill. 1974-1979
- Holy Cross, Mendota, Ill. 1979-1981
- St. Vincent DePaul Parish, Rogers, Ark. 1989-1994
- Sacred Heart, Spring Valley, Wis. 1994-1995
- Benincasa, Riverton, Ill. 1995-2000
- Siena Hall, Springfield, Ill. 2000-2002
- Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield, Ill. 2002-2015

The Riker family always lived in Springfield. They belonged to St. Agnes Parish and the children attended the parish grade school and they went on to either Sacred Heart Academy or Griffin High School.

After graduating from high school Janice entered the Springfield Dominicans, joining her cousin Sister Mathias Clarke, OP, and many other sisters from the Farmersville area who were related.

Sister Maxine had a laughter that was contagious, Sister Judith Hilbing recalled. “It held a room and softened an ambience. She once said she wanted to die laughing. Her creativity and originality helped us to laugh. Her non-possessive, affective energy was a healing force for those of us who resist coming out of our box. ‘Audacity’ is the word she loved. Cottonwood trees that sang, wild tambourines, dandelions, and noisy storms that stirred things up, is what she celebrated.”

An ordinary woman, yes, yet our Sister and our dear friend who brought sunshine and depth into our lives, sharing her goodness and irony, her firecracker wit for so many years.

As someone commented upon seeing the public announcement of her passing: “The world became a little less gentle, a little less funny, and a little less beautiful when we lost our Sister Maxine.”
At the age of 10, Helena Weigand met the Dominican Sisters for the first time when they came to Petersburg, Ill., for two weeks to teach summer school religion.

Though times were hard, Helena’s parents wanted to send her to Sacred Heart Academy for high school. She found work to help cover the cost of tuition.

Helena moved on to attend the College of St. Francis in Joliet. At that time she felt she was being called to religious life, but she wanted to work for a while to repay her parents for her college education. So she taught school for three years—one or two of those years being at Sacred Heart—before entering the novitiate.

For more than 50 years Sister Mary Joseph was a dedicated principal, teacher, and counselor. She was a pioneer at Marian Catholic in Chicago Heights, Ill., and when the community decided to establish an all-girls high school in Aurora, Ill., Sister Mary Joseph was chosen to be the principal and given oversight of the construction of Rosary High School and convent.

The classrooms for that first year at Rosary—for freshmen girls brave enough to opt for a barely established school—were in the abandoned Holy Angels School. Led by Sister M. Joseph, the Rosary faculty slept in the parlor and the infirmary at Holy Angels Convent. They slept on cots. They slept fewer hours than the Holy Angels sisters did. And because they were led by a woman who never complained, amazing things happened: a new infrastructure of brick and glass rose up on Edgelawn Drive, and grew into a learning community.

Sister M. Joseph balanced personal accountability with collective transformation. She recognized the web of connections and the power of right relationships. Ω

Born: Helena Marie, May 5, 1924
Parents: Arthur and Clara (Duncheon) Weigand
First Profession: January 4, 1951
Perpetual Profession: January 4, 1954
Entered into eternal life: August 15, 2015

MISSIONS:
St. Bernardette, Evergreen Park, Ill. 1949-1950
St. John, Carrollton, Ill. 1951-1955
St. Paul, Odell, Ill. 1955-1956
Sacred Heart Academy, Springfield, Ill. 1956-1958
Marian High School, Chicago Hts., Ill. 1958-1962
Rosary High School, Aurora, Ill. 1962-1970
Marian High School, Chicago Hts., Ill. 1970-1980
Rosary High School, Aurora, Ill. 1980-2003
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield, Ill. 2003-2015

Sister Mary Joseph Weigand, OP
“I find great satisfaction in using whatever gifts God has given me,” Sister M. Sharon wrote, “whether it is visiting our sick sisters, cleaning, baking, singing, or looking out for the needs of others.”

Sister Mary Sharon’s quiet way carried her through life into eternity. Her humble life of service never drew attention to herself. As Sisters were talking and sharing memories of her, one said, “She was faithful to what she had learned about God.” Sister M. Sharon spent many years teaching little children and said she found it satisfying because she wanted them to know how much God loved them.

Sister Mary Sharon gave her life to God for 63 years, teaching, being a prioress, a principal, parish visitor, a receptionist at St. Dominic Hospital, and marvelous chef at St. Rose Convent. In fact one of the most mentioned memories of her involves pies. Even when she was suffering from bone cancer, she continued to delight her Sisters with some tasty breakfast rolls or a pie now and then.

“It is not Sharon’s dying with cancer, we will remember,” noted Sister Judith Hilbing during Sister M. Sharon’s services, “it’s her living with cancer – showing up every day – actively participating on the good days and the terribly painful ones. She chose to be there whenever the community ate, prayed, shared, and celebrated.”
Sister M. Carolyn’s musical genius was revealed to her family when she was four. As the story is told, the Notre Dame game was on the radio and during a commercial break, Barbara wandered over to the piano and played the notes of the first line of “Cheer, cheer for old Notre Dame.” Amazed, her mother asked her multiple times who taught her to play that, to which she responded, multiple times, “No one!” She did notice how pleased her dad was, so at the end of the game, she played it again.

Though she seemed shy and reserved in big crowds, when Sister M. Carolyn got near a piano or organ, we saw this confident, masterful person, capable of creating beautiful sound. Through her music, we came to appreciate the depth of her passion, emotion, and intensity. She was also a great listener and was very interested in people, their lives, their ups and downs, their happiness.

Sister M. Carolyn spent many years with high school students at Rosary and Sacred Heart Academy. There are many fond memories of her as a teacher—her passion for music, her appreciation when a student played beautifully, her kindness, and her tolerance of all the mischief and “good trouble” that students created.

Sister M. Carolyn also enjoyed her last parish assignment, St. Patrick’s in Kankakee, Ill. She found her time there pleasant and was inspired by the liturgies even as she inspired others with her music.

At the motherhouse her positive energy was evident as she shared meals, visited in the community room, or met Sisters in the hall. Every week, she came to the atrium and played popular and familiar music on the grand piano, entertaining the Sisters in their rooms as well as the nursing staff.

Ultimately, Sister M. Carolyn’s greatest devotion was to God. She prayed deeply and often. She pondered scripture and spiritual reading, took notes, prayed over them and spoke about them to others. In particular, she was devoted to the Holy Trinity, and often thought about that mystery. Ω

Born: Barbara Ann, May 12, 1930
Parents: Louis and Agnes (Dugan) Englum
First Profession: January 3, 1950
Perpetual Profession: January 3, 1953
Entered into eternal life: October 26, 2015

MISSIONS:
Holy Angels, Aurora, Ill. 1950-1961
Cathedral, Springfield, Ill. 1961-1962
Sacred Heart Academy, Springfield, Ill. 1962-1971
Rosary High School, Aurora, Ill. 1971-1976
Sacred Heart Academy, Springfield, Ill. 1976-1987
St. Patrick, Kankakee, Ill. 1987-2000
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield, Ill. 2000-2015

Sister M. Carolyn Englum, OP
In Gratitude.

Thank you to the following Sisters and friends for sharing their love, care, and memories with us as we remembered and prayed for our beloved Sisters who have died.

Sister Helen Becker
Sister Kathleen Cour
Sister Philip Neri Crawford
Sister M. Gael Daley
Sister Laurentia Fenlon
Sister Kathleen Gallagher
Mr. Jack Heneghan
Sister Judith Hilbing
Sister Beverly Jeanne Howe
Father Steve Janoski

Sister Marianne Nolan
Sister Charlotte Rebbe
Sister Rose Marie Riley
Sister Marion Sitkiewitz
Sister Joan Sorge
Sister Mary Linda Tonellato
Sister Mary Jean Traeger
Sister Francellia Vyverman
Sister Elizabeth Wrenn
Sister Catherine Ann Yeager
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