



Wisdom 3:9

“... the faithful
shall abide with him
in love: Because
grace and mercy are
with his holy ones,
and his care is
with his elect.”

Blessings on the Journey

If you would like to share memories and stay connected with the Sisters, we welcome your visits, correspondence and calls. Our doors and our hearts are open to you!

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To honor the memory of Sister Innocence and her loving concern for others, a donation can be made to the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart to further our works of neighborly love for those in need.

Thank you for enabling Sister to continue doing good on earth through your generosity.



FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART

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*In Loving
Memory*



*Sister M. Innocence
Mills, OSF*

1924—2024



“IN THE TIME OF THEIR
JUDGMENT, THEY
SHALL SHINE AND DART
ABOUT AS SPARKS
THROUGH STUBBLE.
(WISDOM 3:7)

Sister Innocence

At Rest June 29, 2024

Sister Innocence was born July 26, 1924, on the family farm in Sublette, IL, to Joseph and Katherine (Happ) Mills and was the fourth of eight children. Due to her small size at birth and fearful that she would not live, her mother asked her father to pour holy water over her head and baptize her Frances Rose. As she grew, her parents taught her the benefit of hard work to keep a roof over the family and to keep them together through thick and thin. Her mother modeled for her a strong faith and the importance of prayer as she daily fingered a rosary.

Sister Innocence could not remember exactly when she started considering religious life. On one occasion, she was looking at the Sacred Heart Messenger and the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus caught her attention. She also saw a picture of an elderly Sister praying the rosary and noticed that her hands looked as though they had done much hard work. Being a farm girl who had worked hard with her hands on the family farm, that picture left a lasting impression on her.

One day as Sister was paging through

the Sunday Visitor, her eye caught an ad for the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart. She began writing to the Sister in charge of vocations. Finally she told her mother that she was thinking about being a Sister. Weeks before she was to enter the congregation, she told her father about her decision. He gave her an emphatic "No!" telling her she was too young since she had just turned sixteen. He also felt that in a week or two she would probably change her mind. It was her mother who gave the okay saying, "If she does not belong, she will be back in a few weeks."

On September 15, 1940, with blistered hands from working in the field the day before, she entered the convent and never looked back. In her heart she knew that this was God's plan for her. She was received as a Novice on March 19, 1941, professed First Vows on March 19, 1943 and Perpetual Vows on March 19, 1946.

For many years, Sister Innocence has been the hands of Christ serving others. Fifty of those years were in food service where she used not only her hands but her heart as she gave the "cup" in His name. She was so grateful to minister with the older Sisters who she called her "holy books." From them she learned that whatever you did in the kitchen became a short prayer. She also learned that, if you are in charge, you must lead by doing and not just by words.

Sister Innocence joyfully gave the "cup" in His name to the patients at St. Francis Hospital, Freeport, IL, and St. Mary's Hospital, LaSalle, IL; to the residents at Sacred Heart Home, Avilla, IN; to the seminarians at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, IL; to the priests at Cardinal Stritch Retreat House; and to the Sisters here at the Motherhouse. She recalled a particular situation when she was at St. Mary's Hospital in LaSalle, IL.

There was a fire in the oxygen room, and even though she weighed a mere 110 lbs, she pulled a six-foot, 200-pound unconscious worker out of the smoke-filled room. A life-saving "cup" indeed!

In 1990 Sister Innocence retired to the Motherhouse. She described herself as the community's "Go-fer" doing whatever was needed. Often she was driving the Sisters to and from their appointments, taking them on their home visits, taking food to the poor and running various errands. For the 25 years of the Garage Sale, she was in the food booth making a sloppy joe sandwich or putting a hot dog in a bun. Sister also showed great reverence for Mother Earth and supported the Brazilian Sisters' work among the poor through her recycling efforts.

On June 29, God lovingly called Sister to Himself. We extend our sympathy to her many relatives and devoted friends. For 81 years as a religious, Sister Innocence offered a "cup of blessing" to so many. Sister Innocence, we will certainly miss your willing and generous spirit, but may you now drink joyfully of the eternal "cup of love."

Interment: St. Vincent Cemetery,
LaSalle, Illinois



*"Whether we live or die, we
are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8b)*