

Sister Marie Frances Wiederholt, C.PP.S.

Born: August 26, 1927

Professed: August 10, 1948

Entered into Life: September 11, 2020

Verse on her memorial card:

**“This is what the Lord asks: Act justly, love tenderly,
and walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8**



September 14, 2020

Dear Sisters,

Around 4:30 a.m. on Friday, September 11, 2020, our Sister Marie Frances Wiederholt entered eternal life. In the words of Linda Cento, our community nurse, she is now singing with Jesus.

Born and baptized on August 26, 1927, Marie Frances Therese was the fifth of twelve children and the first daughter of Valentine and Mary (Bliley) Wiederholt. When she was between the ages of five and eleven, six of her siblings died, three boys and three girls. As the only surviving daughter, she was very close to her father who called her his “Little Bits,” and the nickname Bitz followed her into adulthood.

In her autobiography, Sister Marie Frances wrote that her mother prayed that the family would be blessed with a priest or a sister. She felt this would be a consolation to her for the loss of so many of her children. Her prayers were answered when Sister Marie Frances joined our community and when her brother, Clarence, became a priest.

Sister Marie Frances (Mary Gerald) entered our community as a novice on July 25, 1946 and professed first vows on August 10, 1948. While acknowledging that her mother’s prayers were influential, she was clear that she entered in response to a call from God.

Sister Marie Frances completed a bachelor’s degree in History at St. Louis University and acquired three master’s degrees: in Educational Administration, Philosophy and Psychology.

Even as a small girl, Marie Frances wanted to teach. She tells of trying to make her brother, Clarence, sit on the sidewalk while she “taught,” but often he dashed away to play. This desire to teach drew her to our community. She noted that the Benedictine Sisters in Clyde “milked cows and had Perpetual Adoration,” and the Franciscans in Maryville were nurses. She wrote, “I had milked a lot of cows at home, had visited our aunt in the hospital often, but I believe God wanted me to teach.”

And, teach she did, for over fifty years! She taught elementary grades at St. Henry, Charleston, MO; St. Columba, Conception, MO; Holy Innocents and Holy Family, St. Louis, MO; and, she was the founding principal and teacher at St. Sabina in Florissant, MO. She also served as an elementary school supervisor and education consultant for the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Most of Sister Marie Frances' teaching career was at the college level: nineteen years with our St. Mary's College and twenty-five years with St. Charles County Community College (SCCCC). As a member of the first faculty of SCCC, she was tasked with opening four departments: Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology and Education. This meant assuming responsibility as Chair of these departments and finding instructors for all the courses. At SCCC she advanced to the status of professor. After retiring from teaching, she continued to serve at SCCC for four years as a computer lab assistant.

Sister Marie Frances had a beautiful voice and loved singing. Even in recent years, when words were difficult for her, she could join in singing. At the celebration of her 70th Jubilee, after the renewal of vows and the singing of the Suscipe, she exclaimed in a clear voice, "Isn't this wonderful?" That simple sentence brought tears to the eyes and joy to the hearts of those present.

Since June 2009, Sister Marie Frances has carried the heavy cross of both the physical injuries and the traumatic brain injury suffered when she was struck by a car while crossing the street. While we never will fully know the extent of her emotional suffering, moments like the one just described help us to trust that her deep faith and love of God continued to live in her heart.

Sister Marie Frances was preceded in death by her parents and by her brothers Gerald, Raymond, Alphonse, Donald, Marvin and Vincent. She was also preceded in death by her sisters, Rosalie, Lucille and Dorothy. What a joy-filled reunion they must be experiencing with their "Little Bits!" She is survived by her brothers, Father Clarence and Robert. Let us hold them in our prayers as they mourn the loss of yet another sibling.

Sister Marie Frances' body will be returned to St. Joseph Chapel at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, September 15, 2020. A wake will be held until 10:45 with a sharing of memories at 10:15 and a Funeral Mass at 11 a.m. Because of Covid-19, attendance is limited to Sisters only.

Sister Marie Frances will be buried next to her parents at St. Columba Cemetery in Conception, MO, with the plot on the other side reserved for Father Clarence. In her words, "To have our monuments next to our parents, saying 'A Bride of Christ' and 'A Priest Forever' would be an honor both for us and for them, and be a testimony to our family's faith for generations to come."

Sister Marie Frances chose Micah 6:8 as the verse for her memorial card: "This is what the Lord asks: act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with your God." We can picture her now not only walking humbly but also dancing joyfully! Let us give thanks for her new, pain-free life.

Sincerely,



Sr. Janice Bader