

Sister Mary Wilhelmine Tikva to celebrate 100 years old!



Sr. Mary during her 75th jubilee in 2010.

Not many people today can say they remember the 1920s when the cost of a dozen eggs was 47¢ and a half-gallon of milk was 33¢. There is a Sister of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate who resides at Our Lady of Angels who probably remembers this and much more. Sister Mary Wilhelmine Tikva, who is the oldest member of the community, has a smile that would brighten any room. She is present at every celebration and enjoys all parties, especially those that have a band that plays polkas! The Congregation will celebrate her 100th birthday at OLA.

Mary Tikva was born in Cleveland, Ohio, to the late Mary and Adam Tikva. She was the oldest of eight children (five brothers and two sisters), all of whom are deceased. She attended Our Lady of Lourdes Grade School in Cleveland. Because she was expected to help out at home, she was unable to attend high school. However, would you believe that in 1972 at the age of sixty-one, she received her High School Equivalency Certificate and continued on with the Evening College Division at Joliet Junior College!



Sitting: Sr. Mary with (from left) Sr. Sue Bruno, Nancy Budzinski and Sr. Sandra Sudkamp were all telephone operators at the Motherhouse in Joliet, IL.

Sr. Mary entered religious life when she was 23 years old in September, 1934, and received the Franciscan habit and her new name, Sister Mary Wihelmine. In 1940, she made her final vows and was given her first ministry as a seamstress at the Motherhouse at 520 Plainfield Road. Her work consisted of making and mending religious habits for over 800 sisters who were part of the congregation. She remained a seamstress for the community for over 33 years. For her second career, Sister Mary found a new job as the receptionist and telephone operator at St. Francis Convent. She continued in this job for 32 years. She was one of the last sisters to move out of the convent in 2003, when the building was sold to the University of St. Francis. She made sure that the postal carrier, the UPS driver and the newspaper deliverer knew that she would be moving to Our Lady of Angels.

You can find Sr. Mary at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home in Joliet. Not a day goes by that you don't see her roaming the halls with her walker, visiting the other residents at OLA, with a big smile on her face. Just last year she celebrated her 75th jubilee in the Congregation. In a couple of days she will mark her centennial celebration with a birthday cake and possibly even a dance; she'll choose the polka of course!



Left: Sisters Mary Wilhelmine Tikva and Marie Thaddeus Kozilek making habits in 1966.