



## *Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate*

On Saturday morning, June 9, 2018, the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, our sister, Loretta Wagner, brought to fulfillment a consecrated life that was characterized by generosity and compassion. Given her devotion to Miriam of Nazareth, whose aid and intercession she frequently invoked for matters great and small, it clearly was in God's plan to grant her the grace of a peaceful death on the occasion of a very special Marian feast day.

Born on August 23, 1918, to her parents Cirilla (Zientarski) and Edward Wajrowski, Loretta Valeria Wajrowski was baptized two days later at St. Hedwig Parish on the north side of Chicago. The eldest of four children, she was raised in St. Pascal Parish where she first met the Joliet Franciscans. By her own account, as a young third grader, she already aspired to be a nurse as she observed the dedicated women caring for her dying grandmother at Alexian Brothers Hospital. A chaplain taking note of the calm and caring presence of nine-year old Loretta, encouraged her to consider a call to religious life and to pray to become a registered nurse. And so the seeds of her vocation were sown. Attending Alvernia High School and St. Francis Academy, Loretta continued to grow in her attraction to Franciscan life and her affection for the sisters who inspired her to be all that she could be.

At the age of sixteen, Loretta entered the postulancy of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate on September 8, 1934, thereby becoming another candidate in a long line of vocations heralding from St. Pascal Parish urged on by the pastor, Msgr. George Heimsath. A year later, on August 12, 1935, she became a novice and received the name of Sister Miriam Edward. During her years in initial formation, along with her studies at the College of St. Francis, she also assisted in the infirmary of the Motherhouse. As Sister Miriam Edward made her first profession of vows in August of 1937, she remembered the hospital chaplain's advice of long ago and remained unceasing in her prayers to become a nurse. Though still far from professing her perpetual vows, she was encouraged by her advocate, Sr. Consolata, to speak directly with Mother Thomasine. Warmly received by the Reverend Mother, Sister Miriam Edward shared her sense of call to become a registered nurse and was told to return a few days later. The next thing she knew, she was enrolled as a student nurse at St. Joseph's School of Nursing and Hospital in Joliet, Illinois.

After completing her nursing studies, Sister Miriam Edward continued to care for the sick and infirm sisters at the Motherhouse, no longer as a nursing assistant but as a registered nurse. In the years that followed, her ministry of nursing took on added dimensions that included leadership, administration, teaching and mentoring. From the struggling young women of Our Lady of Mercy Home in Granville, Ohio, to the more privileged young women of the College of St. Francis, to the sisters at the Motherhouse to the retired sisters at the newly built Our Lady of Angels, Sister "Mim,"

# *Alleluia!*



*Sister Loretta Wagner, OSF*

as she was affectionately called by young and old alike, wore many cloaks and carried out many responsibilities in addition to those associated with her nursing.

From 1969 to 1971, during the turbulent years of renewal following the Second Vatican Council, Sister Miriam Edward, then known as Loretta Wagner, took a leave of absence from the Congregation, during which time she further developed her nursing skills and interests at the University of Texas Medical Center and the M.D. Anderson Cancer Research Hospital in Houston, Texas, one of the original three comprehensive cancer centers in the United States. Upon her return to the Congregation, in 1971, Sister Loretta, in the company of Sister Patricia (André) Britt, continued her ministry in Houston, until in 1974, both were invited by Sister Gerard of the Congregation of the Resurrection to begin what became a seventeen-year ministry on the nursing staff at Resurrection Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. In 1992, at the age of seventy-four, she responded to the appeal of family members in need of nursing assistance. Ten years later, she returned from the Chicago area to Joliet in order to share companionship with members of the community at Our Lady of Angels. As she continued to age and grow in wisdom and grace, she confidently reminded OLA administrators and residents that her RN certification by the State of Illinois was up to date. And, with a twinkle in her eye, she would say "no matter what disastrous conditions might impede OLA nurses from getting to work, as long as Mim is alive and well, there always will be an RN in the house!" Recognized by the Congregation as an innovative creator and director of a community health program, Sister Loretta also was honored by the University of St. Francis as a distinguished alumna.

On June 13, 2015, together with her surviving classmate Sister Marie Schramko, Sister Loretta celebrated her 80th Jubilee. In the subsequent years, as failing health and diminishment began to take their toll, her blood sister, Sister Anne Wayrowski, was a constant companion and care-giver until the time of her own death in March of 2018. As family members, friends and former patients can attest, our Sister Loretta was known for her compassion, empathy and wisdom. A model of tenderness and strength, she was also an undaunted instrument of God's peace and love. With deep gratitude to the Holy One for the gift of Sister Loretta's life and legacy, let us say: Alleluia, alleluia.

## *Sister Loretta Wagner OSF*

*August 23, 1918 — June 9, 2018*

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| <i>Born:</i>                 | August 23, 1918                                      |
| <i>Parents:</i>              | Edward A. Wayrowski and Celia (Zientarski) Wayrowski |
| <i>Postulancy:</i>           | September 8, 1934                                    |
| <i>Novitiate:</i>            | August 12, 1935                                      |
| <i>First Profession:</i>     | August 12, 1937                                      |
| <i>Perpetual Final Vows:</i> | August 12, 1940                                      |
| <i>Entered New Life:</i>     | June 9, 2018   |

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### **Ministry History**

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| 1937-1938 | Student, College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois                                  |
| 1938-1939 | Student Nurse, St. Joseph Hospital, Joliet, Illinois                               |
| 1939-1940 | Student, College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois                                  |
| 1940-1942 | Student Nurse, St. Joseph Hospital, Joliet, Illinois                               |
| 1942-1943 | Nurse Third Floor Infirmary, St. Francis Convent, Joliet, Illinois                 |
| 1943-1945 | Nurse, Prefect and Teacher, Our Lady of Mercy, Granville, Ohio                     |
| 1945-1951 | Resident Nurse, Supervisor, Private Duty, College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois |
| 1951-1956 | Infirmary, Hospital Case Work, St. Francis Convent, Joliet, Illinois               |
| 1956-1961 | Teacher, Nurse, College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois                           |
| 1961-1962 | Nurse on Call, Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, Illinois                                |
| 1962-1967 | Community Health Supervisor, St. Francis Convent, Joliet, Illinois                 |
| 1967-1969 | Nurse, Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, Illinois  |
| 1969-1971 | Canonical Leave of Absence   |
| 1971-1974 | Nurse, Houston Medical, Houston, Texas   |
| 1974-1991 | Nurse, Resurrection Hospital, Chicago, Illinois                                    |
| 1991-1992 | Health Nurse, St. Francis Convent, Joliet, Illinois                                |
| 1992-2001 | Ministry to Family, Chicago, Illinois  |
| 2001-2018 | Community Service, Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, Illinois                            |

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| <i>Wake:</i>                     | Wednesday, June 13, 2018, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet  |
| <i>Prayer Service:</i>           | Wednesday, June 13, 2018, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet   |
| <i>Mass of Christian Burial:</i> | Wednesday, June 13, 2018, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet   |
| <i>Interment:</i>                | Thursday, June 14, Section 8, Lot 344, Grave 5, Resurrection Cemetery   |
| <i>Predeceased by:</i>           | By her parents, Edward A. Wayrowski and Celia (Zientarski) Wayrowski and her sisters Delphine Rankin and Sister M. Anne Wayrowski |
| <i>Survived by:</i>              | Her brother, Edward Wagner  |

*Rest in Peace, Sister Loretta!*