

Sister Mary Irene Pacekonis, OSF

January 31, 1923 - December 27, 2017



Secular Name: Albina Julia
Birth: January 31, 1923
Entrance: August 8, 1939
Parents: Stanley and Mary
Siblings: Adele, Jean
High School: Holy Trinity and St. Francis Academy
Higher Education: MS Ed. Duquesne University

Ministry:

Sister Mary Irene spent more than 50 years in the educational field. In 1946 when she was just 22 years of age, she was asked to go to Sao Paulo to help the Oblates start the very famous Chapel school, which continues today with a stellar reputation for excellence. Sister Irene's love of the Oblate Fathers was well known among our sisters. After seven years in Brazil, Sister Mary Irene returned to the States for a year of full-time study at Duquesne University. The following year she began a ten-year ministry teaching at St. Casimir and St. Valentine.

Sister Irene returned to Brazil where she ministered for the next five years. Returning once again to the US in 1967, she then spent the next 28 years teaching grades 4-6, thirteen of which were at St. Gabriel. Young sixth graders from there remember her many stories of missionary work in Brazil. They knew if they asked a question about Brazil, Sister Irene would forget all about the spelling words she was drilling and the stories could go on and on!

When she began to have difficulty with hearing and vision, she realized there was another ministry God was asking of her. For the next eight years, Sister Mary Irene continued to tell those stories to the little ones in our day care while doing crafts for our Gift Shoppe. She also devoted much of her time to writing to the elderly and shut-ins as well as pass out candy to anyone that would come to the reception area at the motherhouse.

In 2003, Sister Mary Irene began her ministry of prayer but continued working as long as she could on crafts. She was a very prayerful woman and enjoyed playing cards, sometimes stopping her rosary to play Kings around the Corner, at which she was very skilled and would most often win.

Sister Irene continued her prayer ministry at Presbyterian Senior Care where she lived the last years of her life. While she was no longer able to pass out candy to the residents there as she did at the motherhouse, she continued to pray, work her puzzles and play cards.

My hope is in God, my strength and my joy.