

# Sister M. Joan of Arc Urban, OSF

## April 11, 1916 - March 4, 2018



**Secular Name:** Grace Gertrude  
**Birth:** April 11, 1916  
**Entrance:** July 15, 1932  
**Parents:** Grace and Anthony  
**Siblings:** Justine and Anthony  
**Higher Education:** Duquesne University

### Ministry:

Grace Gertrude Urban was born on April 11, 1916 to Grace Smigelskis and Anthony Urban, the first of two daughters. Her sister, Justine, was her childhood and lifelong friend. Her baby brother, Anthony, known as Tony, was a dear and precious friend as well. Sister Joan of Arc had a deep devotion to St. Anthony because of her father and brother.

Grace's story of her life in our Franciscan community began in 1932 when she was just 16 and left her beloved Hartford, CT, and family. Most of her years were spent in education, where she was loved by both students and colleagues. In her early years of teaching, Sister Joan of Arc taught in Elizabeth NJ, Mahanoy City PA, Amsterdam NY, and Brooklyn, NY. She taught mostly junior high students but was also principal while teaching the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades for four years in Kenosha and two years in East St. Louis. She also taught at Holy Trinity, Moon Run and St. Valentine in Pittsburgh. Only at the age of 79 did she return to the motherhouse to assume yet other duties.

Sister Joan of Arc began a 22 year period of community service which meant she did everything anyone asked or needed which included RTR tutoring, craft work for the gift shop, receptionist and, most important of all, postal service. This included preparing the mail, making a snack for the mail carrier, sorting the incoming mail and hand delivering to all the offices and the sisters in the infirmary. All the staff and sisters remember this time because she did it with such a quiet, gentle manner, greeting everyone with her loving smile.

Sister Joan of Arc loved all of nature and especially trees, in which she saw such strength and grace. She loved the poem "Trees" by Joyce Kilmer and even wrote her own poem entitled "Why I Love Trees". She was also an artist and would do sketches and paintings of trees.

Simply...prayerfully...gently...poet and artist...Grace Gertrude Urban, Sister Joan of Arc lived her 101 years "gracefully" and devoted to her faith.



*"...Trees remind me that You have given  
life to go on forever." ~Sr. Joan of Arc*