

## **Sister M. Sylvia Krafton, OSF**

Frances Clare Krafton was born in Lawrence, MA, the daughter of John and Anastasia, Lithuanian immigrants who came to the United States to assure a better life for their eleven children. As the youngest, Frances attended elementary and junior high school in Massachusetts before enrolling in St. Francis Academy in Pittsburgh. From here, she entered the community on September 8, 1938. Her mother, herself a lay Franciscan, largely influenced Frances' decision by her prayerful example and encouragement.

Sister Sylvia's ministry in teaching elementary school children over 36 years took her to such places as Amsterdam NY, Elizabeth NJ, and Kenosha WI as well as Esplen, DuBois and Pittsburgh. From 1982-1993, she served as Director of the community's after-school R-T-R program (Reading-Thinking-Reasoning). She and the retired sisters on her staff taught reading and math skills to eager learners, achieving outstanding results.

When the need arose for home care for her father and two brothers, Sister Sylvia did not shrink from the task. For over fifteen years, she remained caring for them until God called each back to their heavenly home. Her one sister, Sister Celine, a member of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Putnam CT was a resident in her congregation's nursing home until her death.

Upon her return to the motherhouse in 1996, Sister Sylvia coordinated the newly formed community Craft Program and did this until she was again called to assist in caring for her brother Richard in Massachusetts. After his death, Sister Sylvia returned to the motherhouse and began her Ministry of Prayer for three years before her brother Albert needed her assistance. Even though she herself was 85 she felt the need to assist in his care at his home in Salem NH.

Returning in 2008, Sister Sylvia continued her Ministry of Prayer, first at the motherhouse and then in 2014 with our sisters in the Willows, the skilled care unit at Presbyterian Senior Care in Oakmont.

For the next nine years, as her health began to fail and her memory became clouded, she remained the quiet, gentle woman of God. It was only in her final years that she showed some signs of anxiety but was calmed by the sisters and staff who cared for her. Sister Eliana and Pat Enscoe, our nurse, faithfully fed and cared for Sister Sylvia on their visits to the Willows. Who can forget Sister Sylvia's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration with all our sisters and her niece Mary and grandnieces from Ohio? She certainly enjoyed her cake and ice cream! Even when Sister Sylvia did not recognize them, her family lovingly sent cards and greetings for all the holidays.

During her ministerial life she was a happy, prayerful Franciscan, caring and cheerful in her many assignments that allowed her to teach the little ones from kindergarten through grade seven. Sisters and students alike admired her graceful walk, her prim and proper way and her ability to remain calm under stress.

It seems only fitting that we close this reflection by citing Sister Sylvia who often wrote "I serve the Lord, for He is my God." Her favorite scripture quotation that truly expresses her prayerful way of life:

From Deuteronomy: "What does the Lord your God ask of you – but to follow his ways, to live and serve your God with all your heart." (Deut. 10:12)

Eternal rest, dear Sister Mary Sylvia, may you be at peace with your God.