

Sister Mary Edward Urban, OSF

Born: November 22, 1932

Returned to God: July 7, 2024

Aldona Cecilia Urban was born in Lithuania but her parents, Anthony and Anne Urban returned to Cleveland Ohio shortly after her birth. Her sister Bertha was born five years later and her little brother Edward in 1942. Just eight years old Edward died in 1950 and it was Aldona's love for him that she asked for his name as a religious.

After meeting our Sisters at St. George Grade School in Cleveland, Aldona already expressed an interest in joining the Congregation of her teachers. After she graduated from Notre Dame Academy in June 1951, Aldona decided to enter our community in February 1952.

Reading her service record, it is no surprise that Sister Mary Edward was fond of little children. Her very first assignments were to primary grade children at Grand Rapids, Elizabeth NJ, New Kensington and her final year at St. Valentine.

After teaching her favorite little ones for just nine years, Sister Edward was asked to minister with Sisters in Brazil. She spoke of how difficult this request was for her, but her belief in "Going where Providence sends us" was clear. She was worried about her Mother and yet she saw this assignment as God's will for her.

What was then a difficult and real concern for her quickly became "47 wonderful years ministering to the people of Brazil."

Sister Marian in writing a reflection for Sister Edward's 65th Jubilee described her as "magnanimous." Indeed, as Webster says, Sister Edward had "a loftiness of spirit enabling her to bear trouble calmly, to disdain meanness and pettiness and to display a noble generosity." Many of us remember her final words in every phone call: "God bless you, Sister." And if you were special you would be called "Honey." As Sister Marian wrote: "Imagine someone who is friendly, engaging and a delight to sit down with over a cup of tea. Sister Edward was just that sort of person ...she welcomed you into her life where you felt warmth, sincerity and kindness."

During her 47 years in Brazil, she mastered the language, almost, and learned the culture so that she could serve as an English teacher in several of our schools. She served as the principal at the Pio XII's Escolinho (little school) and then as a Language Assistant there. In the far north of Brazil, sister Edward was successful in getting a diocesan school accredited so student could pursue further education.

Sr. Edward spoke of her great love of Parish Ministry for the next 13 years. It was her joy to assist in whatever was needed in the parish. Working for many years at Our Lady of Providence Parish in Real Park, she became close friends of many parishioners and of the pastor, she

worked for, Fr. Roberto Camillato, a member of the Sons of Mary Immaculate congregation. Those friendships endured until her death. She assisted Fr. Robert's Mass online each day and talked to him frequently.

She gained many friends at Our Lady of Providence Parish where she served as secretary, including the pastor, Fr. Roberto, who remained her close confidant and friend over these many years. Gifted with a clear and beautiful singing voice, Sister Edward was often a cantor at parish liturgies. On their phone calls, Fr. Roberto would often ask her to sing something for him.

Fr. Roberto wrote of her when he learned of her death: *"--- You marked and sealed the lives of generations of young people and parish families spread, today, throughout Greater São Paulo, in a desire to gather, aggregate and make them a Living Church, decentralized and hopeful.*

--- For the Friendship that contemplated us and presented us, You were the Big Sister, that Lithuanian, American-Brazilian who captivated us with special and familiar value --- We miss you --- you are leaving us in a void! ---

--- Go... Go..., Sister Maria Eduarda, to the Filial Meeting in Easter Plenitude before the Great-and-Always-Welcoming Father. SING! SING! SING the Victory of the Resurrection in Eternal Glory!

Her service in Brazil came to an end when her beloved sister Bertha was sick and needed her assistance here in Cleveland, Ohio. Once Bertha was somewhat better, Sister Edward returned to the Motherhouse to serve as sacristan, office assistant and volunteer in our Franciscan Child Day Care Center. She had completed her circle of life returning again to the little ones she loved, reading stories and teaching them songs.

However, by 2021 Sister Edward needed more assistance as her health declined. Our Community Nurse, Pat Enscoe, spent many hours assisting her so that she could remain in the townhouse. But as she needed more assistance, Sister Mary Edward went to Brookdale, first in independent living, but quickly moved to personal care. Her Franciscan presence was experienced by both the Brookdale staff and the Hospice caregivers. Our new Community Nurse, Jayne McDonald, assisted Sister Edward regularly to her doctor appointments and follow-up care with the Brookdale and Hospice staff.

Of course, Sister Eliana visited her regularly to get whatever she needed and to see that her room was "tidied up." Over the years, Michael Fisher, our Associate, has been a friend and regular visitor to Sister Edward. During these past two weeks Michael has been with Sister Edward daily. We are so grateful for all those who care so much for our infirm Sisters.

Eternal rest, dear Sister Mary Edward, may you be at peace with your loving God who has sustained you all these 91 years.

Eternal rest grant unto her O Lord, may she rest in peace.