



## *Sr. Mary Catherine Gurley, OSF Professed 1963*

*“Behind your image, below your words, above your thoughts, the silence of another world waits.” John O’Donohue*

Sr. Mary Catherine Gurley, OSF, (formerly Sr. Margaret Patrice), died in Assisi House on August 6. She entered the congregation in 1960 and professed her first vows in 1963. Mary Catherine ministered primarily in education and administration. Her years in ministry took her to the Dioceses of Trenton, Metuchin, Worcester, Buffalo, Boston, Portland, Patterson, and Philadelphia. She also published a number of articles for various publications and played a significant role in the publication of the congregational history.



Perhaps Mary Catherine’s own words best describe her life as a Sister of St. Francis. On a 1997 congregational form requesting that she reflect on her life as Sister of St. Francis, Mary Catherine wrote: “I was born a woman in an Irish family and raised in the Catholic faith. Ultimately I chose to...or was chosen to...become a Franciscan. These four realities—woman, Irish, Catholic, Franciscan—are the jewels I wear and treasure. It is the Franciscan in me, however, that integrates and gives expression to the other three and defines me. The joy, the depth, the freedom, and the path to my God is my Franciscan call. It has made me more ‘woman,’ helped me cherish my own cultural inheritance—‘Irish,’ and challenged me to a deeper and more authentic faith life—‘Catholic.’ This package that is me, sealed with the triple vows, is what I bring to my ministry and the people I meet. This is the ‘me’ that sits before my God.”

On that same form, Mary Catherine offered a brief description of how she saw herself or how she hoped others saw her. “In all things...with all people...before my God, I try to be authentic.” Nowhere was that authenticity more evident than in the fall 2009 issue of *Human Development*. There Mary Catherine shared her experience of learning that, at age 65, she had the “beginnings of Alzheimer’s.” In the final paragraph of the article, she recalled her mother’s advice—“to keep away from the next day.” Instead she set her own plan for the future—“to enjoy the day that is in front of me.”

Poet John O’Donohue wrote “Behind your image, below your words, above your thoughts, the silence of another world waits.” Mary Catherine, as you stand now with the loving God who graced you with such giftedness, remind each of us to revel and rejoice in the “Now” rather than to fear the darkness of an unknown future.

***All services will be held in Assisi House on August 13 and will be private. Burial will be in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery in Aston. A memorial Mass will be held at a future date.***

