



Frances Mary Myers SL
January 2, 1911-April 12, 2010

Blanche Myers, the fifth child of ten, grew up on the family farm outside of the town of Chanute, Kansas. Blanche attended a one-room country school through fifth grade. She then moved into Chanute and lived with a cousin in order to attend St. Patrick's School where she was taught by the Sisters of Loretto. Blanche had Sister Joachim as her teacher: "the most wonderful teacher, a marvelous teacher, I always felt I was special to her," said Frances Mary years later.

Sister Joachim was transferred to Loretto in Kansas City. She requested that Blanche come to Kansas City to boarding school. "I worked my way through the four years and never felt out of place with any of the girls. I was a good athlete and was always on the basketball team and the track team." In 1928, Blanche graduated from Loretto in Kansas City. "I credit my attendance at Loretto in Kansas City for my vocation since I was the only one in our family of ten children who attended a Catholic high school."

In 1930, Blanche entered Loretto and took the name Frances Mary and went to teach at Sacred Heart in Kansas City. She said: "Sister Mary Louis Abell was my first superior, and to her I was just as old and just as important as anybody. There were only four of us. I was never treated like a young sister, so life for me was much better out of the novitiate than it was in."

Frances Mary developed into a gifted teacher in Santa Fe, Kansas City, Los Angeles, St. Louis, and her last three classroom teaching assignments also included being the principal: St. Joseph in El Paso, Texas; St. Mary Grade School in Sterling, Illinois; and Blessed Sacrament in Denver Colorado. "I knew I could help children to self-esteem. When I called on a student, I would look him or her directly in the eye. I never took my attention away from them when they were reciting. After a little while, I could say to them "what do I do when you are

reciting?" 'You look at us, Sister. I owe you my attention.' Now if I can do that for each one of you, you can start doing that for one another."

Irma Portillo remembers, "My husband was taught by Sister Frances at St. Joseph's school in El Paso. She was instrumental in bringing him up on his studies after he attended a school where academic curriculum was very poor. He attributed his successes to her dedicated tutoring early mornings and after school and giving him the love of learning. Now he has another angel in his corner."

While in El Paso Fran sensed the people in the parish were searching for something, so together they organized and had five or six Christian Family Movement groups, each with six couples.

Because teaching religion in a rote manner was an agony for Fran, she created her own curriculum for teaching religion which was published. Fran then earned counseling credentials, and while in Minneapolis began counseling and educating staff members in communication skills.

In 1977 Fran moved to St. Louis where she intended to retire. However, just by word of mouth it became known that she was a marriage and family counselor. Not surprisingly, Fran built quite a clientele.

Fran and Lee Connolly had been good friends since 1950 when they lived in El Paso. In 1995 they moved to Huntington Beach, California, where Lee's sister was in need of their help. Fran continued to counsel, making good use of her skills until her real retirement in 2002.

Fran and Lee moved to the Loretto Motherhouse in 2004 where she thoroughly enjoyed life on the third floor of the Motherhouse Infirmary.

She died in her 79th year as a Sister of Loretto. We are thankful for her life, and for all she did to help people of all ages value themselves and learn to live in peace with family, friends, co-workers.

Thank you Fran for your love and friendship that so many of us will miss. Your gifts will live on in the many lives you have touched.