

February 27, 2023

Dear Sisters and Associates, Co-Workers, Family, and Friends,

On the first Sunday night of this year's Lenten season, S. Carmela Whitton ended her penitential season to celebrate an early resurrection.



S. Carmela Whitton, OSF

Virginia Whitton was born in Cincinnati to Norma and Alton Whitton just over ninety years ago. Shortly after her mother died when Virginia was two years old, Mr. Whitton put their three children in an orphanage until he remarried. At that time Virginia's stepmother added her own three children to the new family unit.

Virginia loved her school days, first at St. Catherine's in Westwood and later at the Academy in Oldenburg. After entering the Sisters of St. Francis in 1952, she completed a bachelor's degree from Marian College (now University) and a master's in elementary education from St. Mary College in Leavenworth, Kansas. She later pursued graduate work in theology at St. John Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan and in spirituality at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

Early ministry days found S. Carmela teaching in intermediate and junior high grades in Indiana and Ohio, and then serving as principal at St. Mark School in Indianapolis. Following these years spent in the field of education, Carm's efforts turned to pastoral pursuits. Reminiscing at the time of her golden jubilee, Carmela shared: "Blessings came early on in the places where I was sent to serve in elementary education. Lessons were taught and learned that became valuable experiences as I moved into pastoral ministry."

When in 1976 the Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan made plans to appoint a Delegate for Religious, considering such a position was "the farthest thing" from Carm's mind. Repeated requests from Individual Sisters, however, helped her sense "a gentle call" to this ministry. Through this appointment the Bishop hoped to strengthen collaboration among the Religious, the Clergy, and his office. Members of the search committee found Carmela to be "down-to-earth and intelligent, both sensitive and sensible." Shortly after Carm assumed this position, another commented, "Her rapport is fantastic."

Having completed six years as Vicar for Religious, Carm was elected to Community leadership on the General Council. When interviewed at the time about her vision of the future role of women religious, Carm spoke of three "signs that seem to shout out at me: the growing awareness and acceptance by the laity of their baptismal commitment; the emergence of women in Church and society; and the mounting injustices and turmoil of our social, political, and economic structures".

A Community periodical later summarized the variety of Carmela's ministries: "Whether teaching elementary students, serving as the school's principal, sharing Community leadership or ministering to the larger church community in various capacities, her thoroughness and attention to needs brought about notable results. She was known not only for strong administrative skills and good people skills, but also for encouraging potential among her staff members." Remaining time in active ministry found Carmela serving as secretary for Project ENCOR in Cincinnati and then returning for nineteen years to parish work in Michigan.

Classmates and friends spoke of Carm as a perfectionist in everything. She kept up with exercises and diet to stay in shape, and always dressed and looked like "the lady", with every hair in place.

She seemed to be an interior designer at heart, choosing furniture to adorn a renovated space, and arranging our Encore, a second-hand used clothing area, in such a way as to promote numerous “sales”. She loved puzzles and parties and visiting state parks.

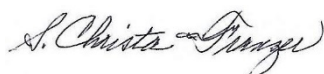
We extend our sympathy to Carmela’s brother Jerald and to all her nieces and nephews. Our thoughts are also with her classmates and special friends in Community. We offer our gratitude to the nursing and pastoral care staff who lovingly cared for Carmela in our health care facility.

Carmela at one time wrote the following to her community and friends in Saginaw; I believe she would share the same wish with each of us as well:

“I pray that wherever you go and whatever you do, the God who has loved you, called you and touched you in the past will act again and again in your life. I pray too that whatever pain or hurts you might have experienced will be healed in time so that you as a ‘wounded healer’ can be a greater source of life and healing to others.”

Thank you, S. Carmela, for allowing God to act again and again in your life—and for allowing God to touch us through you!

In loving memory,



Sister Christa Franzer
For the General Council

SISTER CARMELA (Virginia) WHITTON, OSF

Birth: February 3, 1933

Entrance into Religious Life: February 2, 1952

Entrance into Eternal Life: February 26, 2023

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. CARMELA SERVED:

1953-1962	St. Bernadette, Indianapolis IN	1986-1987	Sabbatical, Cincinnati, OH
1962-1963	Sacred Heart, Clinton, IN	1987-1987	Hannon Florist, Reading, OH
1963-1965	St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, IN	1988-1990	ENCOR, Cincinnati, OH
1965-1967	Our Lady of Mercy, Dayton, OH	1990-2003	St. Andrew, Rochester MI
1967-1973	St. Mark, Indianapolis, IN	2003-2010	St. Mary, Monroe, MI
1973-1976	Blessed Sacrament, Midland, MI	2010-2012	IKRON, Cincinnati, OH
1976-1982	Diocesan Center, Saginaw, MI	2010-2023	Motherhouse, Oldenburg, IN
1982-1986	Leadership Team, Oldenburg, IN		

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Weigel Funeral Home – visit their website to view Sister’s online memorial, and if desired, an online condolence may be left on the site to share with her family and the Franciscan Sisters – www.Weigelfh.com.

VISITATION: Monday, March 6, from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. at the convent chapel.

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL: 11:00 a.m. with Fr. Ken Overberg officiating.

BURIAL will be at the Motherhouse Cemetery in Oldenburg.

For those unable to attend, services will be live-streamed at:

<https://youtube.com/live/-wkl9wAoGwE?feature=share>

Memorials may be made to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, Indiana, 47036 (www.OldenburgFranciscans.org). Weigel Funeral Home, Batesville, Indiana, is handling the arrangements.