



## SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO BOX 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036

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FACEBOOK: FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF OLDENBURG



S. M. GLORIA GALLAGHER, OSF

January 7, 2019

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

In the early hours of January 7, just as the Epiphany star departed the heavens, our beloved Sister Mary Gloria Gallagher made her ecstatic flight to God, the cause of her joy and the source of her music-filled heart. Imagine the delight she discovered as, free from all limitations, she found herself in the warmth and glory of God's presence! Surrounded by the song of the heavenly choir, she must have felt immediately at home!

The oldest of four children, Mary Ann was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on November 12, 1924 to parents Elizabeth Mary Phillips and Edward James Gallagher. She described her home as "a very Catholic one" featuring holy water fonts in all the bedrooms and faithful observance of the First Friday rituals. Together with her three sisters, Mary Ann attended St. Clare School, conscientiously applying herself to her academic studies and beginning some preliminary study of the piano. Her contacts with Oldenburg Franciscans continued when she was enrolled at Our Lady of the Angels High School and enhanced her music study of piano and clarinet under the direction of Sister Olivia (LaVerne Frietsch) and Sister Carolyn Bissmeyer. Later, she taught herself to play the flute. For this budding musician, "OLA band and orchestra . . . became my greatest joy."

Following high school graduation, Mary Ann attended Marian College (University) on a scholarship. At first, her intent was to become a research chemist while studying music as a "sideline". But by the end of her sophomore year, Mary Ann reversed these areas of concentration, choosing music as her major. Reflecting on that strategic decision, S. Gloria later stated, "My four years at Marian were some of the happiest of my life, and the friends I made there are still my dearest and closest friends."

With college degree in hand, Mary Ann began teaching piano part-time at Our Lady of Angels High School. In her new-found ministry, Mary Ann drew on those traits derived from her family tradition, blending "her dad's gentleness and her mother's leadership". Meanwhile, she took classes to expand her own musical knowledge at the College of Music in Cincinnati. She obtained certificates for performance in piano and organ, equipping her to begin private piano lessons at her home. In the midst of this activity, she began to realize that she had a vocation to religious life. "In the back of my mind", she reflected, "I knew that the Lord had His hand on my shoulder and that sooner or later He was going to 'pop the question' concerning the plans for the future He had for me." In the summer of 1950 and with the "guiding light" of Sister Carolyn's encouragement, Mary Ann decided to "cast my lot with the Lord" and entered the Oldenburg Franciscan Community on September 8.

Because she entered the Community already prepared with a music degree, S. Gloria was asked to teach part-time at Immaculate Conception Academy (now Oldenburg Academy) while still a postulant. She resumed her teaching as a full-time teacher there for two years before being sent to both OLA and Fenwick High School in Middletown, Ohio. While studying to earn her Master of Music degree from the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, S. Gloria became the chair of the music department at OLA and held that position for four years. "Then," she recalled, "in the summer of 1960, a surprise came with a transfer to Oldenburg where I was to chair the Music Department [at ICA], take charge of the Novitiate Choir and serve as the Motherhouse organist. I still remember my prayer as I climbed the choir steps for the first time and prepared myself to meet my first Novitiate Choir!" S. Gloria described the next twenty years at Oldenburg as a wonderful and happy time, a ministry that brought fulfillment and delight. Amid her many duties, she found time to compose the Community's beloved hymn, "The Blessing of St. Clare".

With this characteristic enthusiasm, S. Gloria accepted her next assignment in 1980, teaching “everything in the catalogue” at Marian College (University) and serving as music department head for several years. Even when her ministry moved to part-time in 1994, she continued to enjoy working with young piano and strings students. S. Gloria’s energy for music was contagious and motivating. She kept her professional involvements by serving as a member of the Cathedral Choir in Indianapolis, being state chairperson for music performance competitions of the Indiana Music Teachers Association, and by participating in many Community committees.

It was S. Gloria’s joy to stay in touch with the many loyal students whose lives she influenced on both the high school and college level. Her uncanny memory for each student’s situation and attentiveness to each person continued to endear her to one and all. Even in retirement, S. Gloria enjoyed the deep connections she had made with former students, finding herself the recipient of bountiful visits, letters, and tributes. On the occasion of S. Gloria’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Sister, former ICA students surprised her by playing an evening full of her favorite music, an event they named “S. Gloria’s Opus”. An ICA graduate noted, “You always seemed to be able to find out things we could do best and make us feel good about ourselves.” Certainly, these words capture an experience shared by many—S. Gloria’s quiet, overflowing love, gently caring about them.

We extend our deepest sympathy to S. Gloria’s family, her Sisters and Associates in Community, and the many friends and former students whose lives have been enriched by her gift of both music and love. Now, before the Divine Presence, may she intercede for all of us and carry our songs of praise to our God!

In blessed remembrance,

*Sister Delouise Menges, OSF*

Sister Delouise Menges, OSF  
*For the General Council*

#### S. MARY GLORIA (Mary Ann) GALLAGHER

Birth: November 12, 1924

Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1950

Entrance into Eternal Life: January 7, 2019

#### MISSIONS AT WHICH S. GLORIA SERVED:

1952-1954	Immaculate Conception Academy (OA) and Novitiate, Oldenburg, IN
1954-1955	Our Lady of Angels High School, St. Bernard, OH
1955-1956	Fenwick High School, Middletown, OH
1956-1960	Our Lady of Angels High School, St. Bernard, OH
1960-1980	Immaculate Conception Academy (OA), Oldenburg, IN Novitiate Choir Director and Congregational Organist
1980-1988	Marian College (University), Indianapolis, IN
1988-1989	Sabbatical
1989-2013	Marian College (University), Indianapolis, IN
2013-2019	Motherhouse, 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](http://www.Weigelfh.com)*

*Memorial Donations in Sister’s memory may be given online at [www.OldenburgFranciscans.org](http://www.OldenburgFranciscans.org)*