



## SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

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August 30, 2022

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

S. ROSE O'BRIEN, OSF

When Sister Rose O'Brien composed a hymn which she entitled "The Dawn", she could not have known how appropriate for her would be its refrain just as day dawned on this 30<sup>th</sup> of August: "The dawn from on high will break upon us to shine in our darkness and lead us in peace."

Rose was born in Covington, Kentucky to James and Elizabeth Hery O'Brien, parents of Irish descent. She spoke of her mother as always being there for the family: "This gave me a sense of security which endured." About her father, Rose shared: "His appreciation and enjoyment of life was contagious. I think he was the most caring individual I've ever known." It was obvious as Rose spoke as well of her older sister and her two younger brothers and two younger sisters that family was important to her and she treasured each one.

During both elementary and high school years Rose took part in band, orchestra, and chorus; thus began her life-long love of music. Teachers throughout these twelve years were all Oldenburg Franciscans. As early as her freshman year Rose began to think and pray about the possibility of her own religious vocation. Immediately after high school then, she asked whether she might enter the Franciscan Order. This Community felt right since her Dad was a teacher and the Oldenburg Franciscans ministered in education as well.

The first eleven years of Rose's teaching career took her to schools in Bloomington and Kansas City, quite a distance from home and family. She was happy to return to elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for the following twelve years. Earning a master's degree in theology then opened a new ministry path in Rose's directing religious education programs. Beginning to long for more quiet time to pray and just to be, Rose asked to spend the next four years at the Community's House of Prayer. This opportunity offered her an experience of deeper contemplative prayer; it was during this time that she also composed some of her music for prayer.

Rose's next educational venture took her to Cincilingua, where she provided one-on-one language instruction in English. Her time at this school was punctuated by a year spent in Guaymas, Mexico, working with older women and teaching an English class. Desiring to work with the poor, a final educational ministry found Rose taking on GED instruction and beginning an English as a Second Language program at Lower Price Hill Community School. For her years of outstanding service and devotion to the students of Lower Price Hill, Rose was honored with the first annual "Carl Ingle Award".

Obviously, Rose's checkered ministry experiences centered around the field of education. When asked which of these were most fulfilling, she responded, "Welcoming immigrants and international students by sharing a language has been so exciting for me. When the poor are educated, they become contributing members of their neighborhoods and communities. As this happens, all the People of God are bettered."

Rose is described by her Sisters as a "delightful companion," a "great storyteller," and "one who could talk to anyone". She loved to travel, and travel she did—to the Canadian Rockies, to Alaska, to Florida. I'm told that, when her travelling companions would go to look for Rose, they'd find her somewhere, dancing and enjoying the music.


In ending an autobiography which she wrote as part of an application for an ongoing education program, Rose wrote, “Lastly in my life I think that I have most enjoyed being creative and doing creative things.” As examples, she cited writing short stories, playing guitar, organ, and piano (even without music), sharing her original musical pieces, and participating in choral groups. At Oldenburg Rose enjoyed taking part in group activities, game days, parties and trips. She especially loved singing in the choir, and delighted in having the choir sing some of her own music.

I understand that, during these last years as Rose participated in various discussion groups, her constant mantra was “God is love. God loves each of us. And God loves all of creation!” This is evident in some of the hymns she composed—verses which speak of “the gentle falling rain,” “the bird’s mellow call,” “the graceful dancing trees”. “Who are You, O beautiful God?” begins the refrain of another of her songs—“When I see your works I name You blessed.” How appropriate then, that Rose would go to meet her “beautiful God” during this Season of Creation!

As we celebrate Rose’s rich life among us, we offer our sympathy to her sisters Ann and Mary, to her devoted nieces and nephews, and to her classmates and special friends. Our gratitude extends to the nursing and pastoral care staff who lovingly cared for Rose in St. Clare Hall.

Joining in Rose’s own refrain, we believe that the Dawn has broken upon her, has shown through the darkness, and has led her to peace.

In loving memory,

  
Sister Christa Franzer  
*For the General Council*

SISTER ROSE O’BRIEN (formerly S. James Ellen)

Birth: September 16, 1930  
Entered Religious Life: September 11, 1948  
Entered Eternal Life: August 30, 2022

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. ROSE SERVED:

1950-1951 St. Anthony, Evansville, IN	1976-1978 St. James, Cincinnati, OH
1951-1956 St. Mary, Bloomington, IL	1978-1983 St. John Baptist, Dry Ridge, OH
1956-1962 Our Lady of Sorrows, KC, MO	1983-1987 House of Resurrection, Cincinnati, OH
1962-1966 Our Lady of Victory, Cincinnati, OH	1987-1988 Inlingua School/Languages, Cincinnati, OH
1966-1967 St. James, Cincinnati, OH	1988-1989 Maryknoll Program
1967-1968 St. Francis Cincinnati, OH	1989-1996 Inlingua School/Languages, Cincinnati, OH
1968-1973 St. Bartholomew, Cincinnati, OH	1997-1997 Sabbatical
1973-1974 John XXIII, Middletown, OH	1997-2014 Inlingua School/Languages, Cincinnati, OH
1974-1976 Our Lady of the Rosary, Cincinnati, OH	2014-2022 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)

