

Remembering Gloria Glinski, IHM

Nov. 7, 1926 – Aug.30, 2021



Sister Gloria Glinski was a woman of many beautiful qualities, which she exemplified in her full life. Of the many virtues that were expressed in conversations and in comments describing her at the time of her death, those most frequently expressed were: prayerfulness, kindness, gentleness, gratitude, generosity, sensitivity to others, and so many more which she lived in such a quiet, unassuming way.

Gloria's mother and father met in Detroit during World War I. Her father fought in France and returned home safely after the war. Shortly after his return, her mother, Julia Mary Lewandowski, and her father, Walter Anthony Glinski were married in St. Leo's Church in Detroit, on May 12, 1920.

Gloria's life began on a sunny Sunday afternoon, Nov.7, 1926, in Detroit. She was welcomed by her parents and a burgeoning family of grandparents, numerous aunts and uncles and some cousins in her mother's family. She was baptized "Gloria Rose" on Dec. 5 at St. Ladislaus Parish in Hamtramck. Her brother Eugene was born two years later. He was a delight to all the family, but his precociousness and inquisitiveness, led to his tragic death at about three years of age. She remembers the pain of her parents and her own loss of a brother and playmate. Following her brother Eugene's death, she and her parents welcomed two additions to their family. Robert Anthony was born a year later, and Jerome Joseph arrived two years after. As they grew, Bob and Jerry were inseparable. Gloria wrote that it was fun having two little brothers, except a little later when they wanted to tag along or when they curtailed her plans. She definitely was their older Sister.

She and her brothers grew up in Hamtramck where their father worked in the Police Department, a job that was very important to him and his family.

Sister Gloria's school years began with Kindergarten, and then to St. Ladislaus School where she continued her education through grade 11. The Sisters who taught her were Franciscans from Sylvania, Ohio. They were lovely women whom she admired. Her first-grade teacher was especially warm and caring. This was her first experience with Sisters and somehow, deep within her she began to know she wanted to be a Sister.

Before she was in first grade she did not know "Sisters". Her first grade teacher, Sister Casimir was an exceptional person. She guided her along with the ease of a "pro." Her desire to be a Sister never left her. Even though at times she looked at other options, the call was implanted deep in her heart and she rejoiced and treasured that. Other teachers she had were very impressive in grade school as well as her high school teachers.

Gloria's first glimpse of IHM Sisters occurred when she was downtown with her mother. Gloria saw two Sisters getting on a bus. When she saw their black and blue habits billowing in the wind as they boarded the bus, she asked her mother about them. She was told that they were IHM Sisters, and she never forgot them. They were interwoven into her mind along with the Franciscans she knew. When she was in the eighth grade her family attended the reception of her IHM aunt, Sister Mary Hope. It was then that she was aware of where she longed to be.

After her junior year in high school and knowing that she wanted to be an IHM Sister, she spoke to her parents about transferring to Girls' Catholic Central where the IHMs were teaching. Her parents were a little perplexed, but they agreed with her wishes. It was there that she met Sister Marie Aimee who was her senior homeroom teacher and who became a very good friend. During that year, Sister Marie Aimee asked her if she ever thought of being a Sister. She replied in the positive! It was while her family were having Easter dinner that she told her parents of her decision to become an IHM and was greatly relieved when her mother told her they would never stop her from following her vocation. After this announcement she could hardly wait to tell her aunt, Sr. Mary Hope, about her plans.

After graduation in June, Gloria prepared for her entrance into the Postulate on July 2, 1944. She was received as a Novice on Jan. 2, 1945 and was given the name Sister Roberta Marie. She made her First Profession of Vows on Jan. 2, 1947, and her Final Vows on January 2, 1950.

Sister Gloria's first mission was teaching second grade at St. Joseph in Monroe. Following her profession, she taught second grade at St. Boniface in Detroit for one year before going to teach second grade at St. Stephen in Port Huron for seven years. One of her fondest memories was escorting her second grade class to the lake for a picnic. After St. Stephen's, Sister Gloria taught second grade at Our Lady of Good Counsel for five years. She enjoyed getting her second graders ready for their First Communion and helping them understand that "Jesus Himself was coming to them through the small wafer of bread". She continued teaching for a total of 36 years at Michigan schools in Battle Creek, Ann Arbor, Jackson, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and Flint, as well as a year at St. Rene in Chicago before she felt called to a new ministry.

During Gloria's last years of diminishment, she grieved over deaths in her family, her hearing loss and dependence upon others to drive her wherever she had to go after her driving permit was suspended. She accepted all graciously and even when she was unable to communicate with others, one never left her sick room without a "thank you for coming" right up until the very end. She was well known in the Health Care Center and made it her special mission to visit the sick and dying as frequently as was possible.

This Remembering was written in 2015. Something special happened just 10 days before Gloria died that Rose Ange Leddy shared with us. Gloria visited this Chapel as part of a small group from McGivney Way who gathered for a reflection and prayer experience.

Each was invited to walk around the chapel and recall all the graces they had experienced in this sacred place, recall the sisters who were their community friends, women who had meant so much to them on their faith journey. As Gloria was making her pilgrimage around the chapel pausing before statues, stations, icons, she stopped at the Pieta. She knelt on the marble step, reached her hand up – and then rested her head in deep prayer. An experience for Gloria of communion with her God. A beautiful final image of Gloria as she completed her pilgrimage on Earth.

And now we can say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Now enter the home of your Father." May you rest in peace, Gloria.

Written by Carola Keffler, IHM

Delivered by Monica Stuhlreyer, IHM, Sept. 2, 2021