

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Irene Holz

(Sister Mary Florine)

BORN: March 1928

ENTERED CONGREGATION: February 14, 1957

DIED: April 6, 2020

Sister Irene Holz, for her 60th Jubilee, cited a phrase from her Polish tradition to pay her parents the ultimate compliment: “To be for God and for the people.” In this quote Irene expresses her appreciation for the deep relationship her parents had with their God and the respect and deep relationships they had with the people in their lives. In preparing to write this eulogy, it became very obvious that this quote clearly describes the deep relationship Sister Irene had with her God and the joy she experienced in her relationships with God’s people.

On March 4, 1928, Irene was born to Joseph and Matylda (Drozd) Holz. Irene, preceded by her brothers Gilbert and Theodore, completed the Holz family. Irene had very fond memories of her childhood. Her father, a violinist, and her brother Gilbert, an accordion player, filled the house and the neighborhood with music. Many a polka was enjoyed by one and all! The family’s connection with their parish, especially through her mother’s involvement there, as well as involvement with many social groups, would prove instrumental in Irene’s formation as a parish leader and organizer.

Upon completion of high school, Irene went to work for a local lumber company during the day while taking evening classes at John Carroll University. It was there that Irene was introduced to the Sodality of Our Lady, founded by the Jesuits to deepen one’s personal devotion to Mary and to living a more Christian life. Through her membership in the Sodality, Irene was introduced to Ignatian

Spirituality which had a profound effect on her life. Through attendance at daily Mass, Irene was aware of the Sisters in the parish and they of her. Sister Veneranda clearly had her eye on Irene. One day, meeting Irene in a neighborhood store she asked her if she “ever considered joining the Sisters of the Precious Blood?” In consideration of the question, Irene recalled, Ignatian Spirituality asks: “What more can I do for the Lord?” So, at age 28, Irene entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood on February 14, 1957.

After profession of vows, Irene began teaching while completing her education. She earned a Bachelor of Science in education in 1966 and a master’s in theology in 1971 from the University of Dayton. Irene served as a teacher, vice principal or principal in Catholic elementary schools and parish religious education programs in Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri and Michigan. By the time she returned to St. Rita’s in Dayton, Irene had shifted from children to adult education.

In 1984 Irene returned to the classroom as a student to study Biblical Spirituality at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Upon completion of her studies, which included a trip to the Holy Land, Irene’s love of her faith and her passion to explore the Gospel message with others would lead her back to parish ministry, focusing in adult faith formation. The next 10 years Irene served the people of God as a director of religious education or pastoral associate at parishes in North Canton, Mansfield and Brook Park, Ohio. She officially retired from parish ministry in 1995. In her retirement, she answered her brother Ted’s call for help and went to work as a legal secretary in

his law office.

To observe Sister Irene Holz, one would notice her quiet, gentle presence. To talk with and get to know Irene one would soon come to realize the rich depth of her love for her God, her desire to live a life faithful to the Gospel of Jesus and her passion for inviting others to know and love their God deeply so to live the Gospel fully.

Irene never grew tired of going deeper into the mystery of God. She loved the rosary and had a great devotion to Mary. She loved the teachings of Ignatius of Loyola. She loved to be present to the beauty of nature and to soak in all that it could teach her about being in relationship with the Divine Creator. Irene loved to read! She loved to share what she read with others and enjoyed hearing their thoughts. It is perhaps in this that Irene found the most profound nourishment for her soul. From the time she was at John Carroll University and was introduced to the Sodality of Our Lady, she had a hunger to organize and engage in spiritual conversation with others.

Irene’s walk home to her creator was quiet and peaceful. During her time at hospice she shared in her beloved rosary, heard words of encouragement and was treated to some polka music. Early Monday morning she slipped quietly into the familiar embrace of the one she trusted and loved her entire life. Perhaps she is now enjoying a walk in the garden or maybe a good conversation over a hot cup of coffee and a gingerbread cookie!

— Sister Patty Kremer