

SISTER MARY ODILIA SWIDERGAL 92, died in Our Lady of the Angels Convent, Chicago, Illinois, after 73 years in religious life.

Sister Mary Odilia was born in Chicago, Illinois on November 17, 1917, third of eight children of John and Dorothy Swidergal. At her Baptism in St. John of God Church on November 24, 1917, she was given the name Sophie.

Finishing elementary school, Sophie entered the aspirancy and attended Good Counsel High School. Following her senior year, she sought admission into the Felician Franciscan Order and was accepted, given the religious name of Sister Mary Odilia at her Investiture on August 12, 1937.

For twenty years, Sister Mary Odilia was a first grade teacher at St. Hedwig Orphanage in Chicago, Illinois. While at the orphanage, Sister Mary Odilia had ample opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a variety of everyday experiences, which she loved to share with others. After leaving St. Hedwig Orphanage, Sister Mary Odilia taught in the primary grades in both Illinois and Wisconsin. Her teaching ministry spanned forty-seven years.

A former pupil from Holy Cross School in Joliet, Illinois wrote this about Sister Mary Odilia. "You taught me how to read, spell and pray to God. Because of you, I am an outstanding person with a great love of life and God. You have shown the way of what it is like to be a good Christian and have morals in my life."

In 1988, Sister Mary Odilia began her ministry of assisting the sisters in the infirmary as a patient aide. When she herself became a patient and resident of Our Lady of the Angels Convent, she continued to remain active assisting the sick sisters in whatever way she could, particularly leading them in the recitation of the rosary and the singing of Polish hymns.

Sister Mary Odilia will be remembered for all the joy she brought others, especially her sisters in community and to the members of her family. Sister Mary Odilia would spend hours writing verses in English or in Polish to send to others as joy filled birthday and feastday wishes.

On the morning of December 3, 2007, Sister Mary Odilia peacefully gave her last breath to God and opened her eyes to the glory of God.

Members of her family and sisters in community attended her Mass of Christian Burial on the evening of December 7, 2009. The following morning, her body was taken for interment to St. Adalbert Cemetery in Niles, Illinois.