



Name: Sister Imelda Ann Dickrell
Date of Birth: January 3, 1924
Place of Birth: Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin
Parents: Nicholas and Norma (Becker) Dickrell
Religious Profession: August 15, 1941
Date of Death: September 24, 2020
Age: 96
Years Professed: 79

Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Genevieve Olive (Olivia) Dickrell was born to Nicholas and Norma (Becker) Dickrell in Elkhart Lake, WI on January 3, 1924. She was baptized at St. Ann's Catholic Church on January 8, 1924. She made her Solemn Holy Communion on May 10, 1936 and was confirmed on June 14, 1936 by Most Rev. Paul P. Rhode, D.D.

Genevieve was the seventh oldest of sixteen children. There were nine girls and seven boys in the family. She grew up on a farm in St. Anna, Wisconsin. By the time the family was complete, her Dad owned and ran three farms so that each child had a job outside, as well as inside the house. The family had a few milking cows for the family's use and the extra milk was sent to the cheese factory. Crops for the canning factory were also planted and harvested to earn money for the needs of the family. Besides cooking, baking and sewing, Genevieve's Mother also helped with the outside chores. Genevieve's family lived a frugal life. They never considered themselves poor. They had close ties and friendship (most of the time) in work, play and prayer.

The family prayed the Rosary together during the season of Lent. They enjoyed eating meals together and talking with one another. The meal prayers were prayed in German. Genevieve's Dad would attend two Masses on Sundays, because the car only held seven passengers. When Genevieve went to Mass, she saw the Sisters in Church and as a second grader had a desire to be a Sister.

Genevieve attended the Public School until fourth grade when she switched to St. Anna Catholic School. How wonderful this was that she finally could have the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity as teachers. Genevieve was especially fond of Sister Syra Whitman, who taught primary grades. She would take every opportunity she could to talk with her. When Genevieve was in eighth grade she talked to her Pastor, Father Schmitz, about being a Sister. Her parents supported this desire.

Genevieve entered Holy Family Convent Aspirancy on August 16, 1937 to begin her high school education in the Academy. On Reception Day, June 14, 1939, Genevieve was given the name Sister Imelda Ann. At that time, there was a Sister Imelda in the Community, so the "Ann" part of her name was added, in honor of attending St. Anna School. When Genevieve was in the fourth grade, she heard the third graders reading a story of Blessed Imelda's life. She was deeply impressed with this holy child,

that when she got home from school, she announced to her Mother that the next girl that was born should be named "Imelda!" Her youngest sister was named Imelda!

Sister Imelda Ann graduated from Holy Family Academy in June 1941. She took education classes at Holy Family College and taught for five years, before continuing her education at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Dietetics May 31, 1949.

For forty years Sister Imelda Ann served as a dietitian in our three hospitals and in our college. For two years she taught student nurses at Holy Family Hospital in Manitowoc. For six years she taught at Good Samaritan Hospital in Zanesville, Ohio. Sister Imelda Ann was very much a people-person and in her administrative role, in each hospital, she would make-the-rounds to visit all the patients. When teaching, she would take student nurses with her, to guide them in how to learn about the patient. Through conversation with the patient, the student would learn the needs of their diet. One time, while making rounds, Sister Imelda Ann visited a patient who happened to be a doctor. As they talked he asked Sister what she did in the evenings. Sister Imelda Ann shared with him her love for making rosaries. The doctor, a Methodist, asked Sister questions about the rosary and asked her to teach him how to pray it. The doctor kept in touch with Sister Imelda Ann and continued to pray at least one decade of the rosary every day.

Another joy for Sister Imelda Ann was serving for nine years, as Dietitian at Silver Lake College of the Holy Family. Her involvement with the students led to the beginning of the annual Pancake Breakfast. Sister Imelda Ann was a Homemaker in Appleton, Green Bay, Kaukauna and Waukesha in Wisconsin, West Point, Nebraska, Zanesville, Ohio and Yuma, Arizona. She truly was a home-maker. The Sisters missioned with her over the years, reported that her love for people, interest in each one, her joy and sense of humor helped to enable a fun-loving spirit in the Convent homes. Over and above this, Sister Imelda Ann created attractive and delicious meals!

Sister Imelda Ann moved from St. Francis Convent in 2013 to become a resident in St. Rita Health Center. She was a member of the Prayer Apostolate, praying for the Sisters and People of St. Paul Elder Services. Her prayers and intercession are needed, more than ever, during this time of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

At the time of her Jubilee, Sister Imelda Ann wrote, "All these years living as a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity - my only hope is that I have lived them well, and that Jesus and Mary will be waiting for me when I go Home." We thank Sister Imelda Ann for her example of frequent words of gratitude and her quick, up-lifting smile, that always encouraged others. She lovingly accepted her sufferings and limitations and participated in Christ's work of redemption. Sister Imelda Ann frequently asked Jesus to come and take her home. On Thursday night, when Jesus came, she gave herself up completely and handed herself over to Him.

Sister Imelda Ann, eternal life grant to you and may perpetual light shine upon you. Thank you for being our Sister, a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. Thank you for continuing to intercede for our Community. May you rest in peace!