

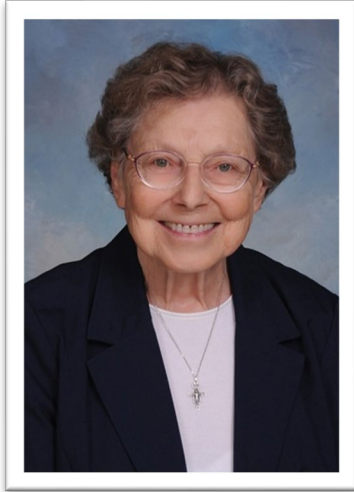


## *Sr. Evelyn Grudza, OSF*

### *Professed 1955*



*"When your life awakens and you begin to sense the destiny that brought you here, you endeavor to live a life that is generous and worthy of the blessing and invitation that is always calling you." John O'Donohue*



Sr. Evelyn Grudza, OSF, passed away on Tuesday, February 25, 2025. Throughout her 70 years as a professed Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia, she lovingly embodied the Franciscan charism and deep faith. Sr. Evelyn entered the congregation in 1953 and professed her first vows in 1955. She shared her wisdom, generous spirit, and Franciscan joy with all she encountered through her ministry in education, pastoral care, and community life.

Evelyn Jane Grudza was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she attended St. Francis of Assisi Parish and graduated from Little Flower High School. As an only child raised by her grandmother and aunt after the passing of her parents, joining religious life allowed her to embrace a much larger family. Sr. Evelyn once reflected, "The members of my set of 1955 became my 'other family,' and meeting so many people through my ministries has enriched my life even more. They, too, have become family." She earned a bachelor's in English from Mount St. Mary's College and a master's in education from Towson State University. A dedicated educator and certified chaplain, she ministered primarily in education and pastoral care.

For 64 years, Sr. Evelyn served in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. She taught at St. Anthony of Padua School, St. Lawrence School, St. Elizabeth School, and St. Clement School, all in Baltimore. She also taught and served as principal at St. Joseph School in Baltimore and taught at Immaculate Conception School in Towson. After 22 years in education, she transitioned to parish ministry at St. Michael Catholic Church. She later served as the Coordinator of Evangelization, Young Adults, and Special Projects for the Archdiocese of Baltimore and was involved with the National Formation Conference in Silver Spring. Sr. Evelyn then spent 29 years as a chaplain and volunteer coordinator at St. Joseph Medical Center in Towson, later continuing as a volunteer. She saw her role at the hospital as "bringing a 'presence' of the three Franciscan sisters who founded the hospital in Baltimore to life. Our job is to be among the people, to encourage them, and then move on. It's very rewarding." She also taught at schools in the Wilmington and Naples Dioceses.

Many remember Sr. Evelyn for her warm and welcoming smile, as well as her kind and gentle nature. Sr. Pat Smith recalled, "Sr. Evelyn taught my brother in first grade, and I would sometimes help clean. She was always friendly and kind, always smiling. She would come out to play with the children and ask how we were doing." Sr. Evelyn valued relationships and saw staying connected as part of her ministry, particularly with her many cousins. Her dear friend, Sr. Michele Kriczky, shared, "How can you describe a person of her character? She was a true inspiration as a friend and mentor. She loved her 70 years of religious life and was a gracious and humble servant of God."

A woman of great organization and dedication, Sr. Evelyn approached every task with care and diligence. Friendship and faith remained central to her life. Father Joseph Breigher once wrote in the *Catholic Review*, "Through all her ministries, Sr. Evelyn has remained ageless, tireless, and unswerving in her dedication. She would be the last person on Earth to seek honor. She knows for whom she works and for whom she lives." In her free time, she enjoyed reading, gardening, cooking, and traveling.

When asked what being a Sister of St. Francis meant to her, Sr. Evelyn wrote, "For me, it means being sister and brother to everyone I meet. It also means that all of creation is sacred and must be treasured. It means reaching out to those who have less than I do and sharing in their pain and sorrow." Sr. Evelyn lived in the spirit of Micah 6:8: *"To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."* Rest now, Sr. Evelyn, in peace with your Lord, knowing that you have done what was yours to do.

*All services will be held at Assisi House on Friday, February 28, 2025, and will be livestreamed.  
Viewing will begin at 9:30 A.M., followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M. Burial will be in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.*

