



## **Eulogy of Sister Mary Judine Bruch, BVM**

Caritas Studio, Feb. 26, 2021

Good morning. It is good to be together to celebrate the life of our Sister Mary Judine Bruch.

Mary Ursula Jean Bruch entered this world on Feb. 16, 1930, in Granite City, Ill., as the sixth child of Oliver and Mazie (Homyer) Bruch. Ollie worked for steel and distributing companies while Mazie ministered as a hospital nurse. Ursula joined siblings Virginia, Louise, and Theresa, with younger brother Walter following. Her eldest sister, Lois, and her older brother, John, died from pneumonia before the age of two.

The Bruch family was modest, hardworking, welcoming, and loving. Ursula was the last living sibling and was deeply loved by her many nieces and nephews as well as their children.

After graduating from Xavier High School in St. Louis and filled with the desire “to serve God the best way possible,” Ursula entered the BVM Congregation on Sept. 8, 1947. She received the name Judine upon her reception on March 19, 1948, professed her first vows on March 19, 1950, and lived 73 years as a BVM.

After profession, Judine was sent to finish the school year as a kindergarten teacher at St. Ambrose in Des Moines, Iowa. For the next 13 years, she was missioned as a first grade teacher at St. Cornelius in Chicago, and at St. Thomas More and Holy Redeemer in San Francisco.

In 1963, Judine was one of four BVMs who staffed the newly opened Cardinal Spellman School in Omaha, Neb., the only Catholic school in the United States designed and built to serve a military base. The sisters were quickly indoctrinated into military life and culture. Judine brought seasoned experience and great creativity to her fourth and fifth grade classrooms and to the entire school. She gave helpful advice regarding teaching, bulletin boards, and discipline, and was admired by her students and their parents.

Judine left Cardinal Spellman after three years to complete a master’s degree in administration and reading specialization from Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa. Afterwards, she was missioned as teacher and principal at St. Anthony in Missoula, Mont. She also served the parish as a religious education instructor, preparing teenagers and adults to receive the sacraments. When Judine decided to leave Montana, a parishioner wrote, “I don’t want to give you up! However, I know that we must share with the other people of God those through whom the Spirit flows freely and who give so generously of their talents.”

Judine returned to Cardinal Spellman to serve as principal, where she was once again loved by her students. A BVM teacher at the school recalled, “The younger children would race across the yard as she appeared in the mornings to take her hand and compete to carry her books.” Judine was an exceptional principal who related well with school board members and parents. She successfully recruited parents to help with various classes and school activities. She also grew and maintained good relationships with the military and other Catholic schools in the area.

Judine was open to the ideas of others and flexible enough to experiment with new curricula and new procedures. She initiated the Great Books program at Cardinal Spellman and encouraged the school librarian to promote

excellence in reading. Through Judine's leadership, these and many creative education programs were implemented, earning the school an educational rating of excellent.

While in Omaha, Judine served on parish liturgy and steering committees and was a Communion minister. She later served in parish ministry and religious education at Immaculate Heart Parish in Denver, Colo., and was an independent counselor and seminar facilitator in the greater Denver area.

In a letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul wrote, "We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God" (1 Corinthians 2:12). Judine was blessed with unique gifts that were described by people who knew her as "possessing the transcendental."

Judine was sensitive, insightful, spiritual, and mystical. She believed that everyone has a beautiful person within and longed to help that beauty rise to the surface. In pursuit of this desire, Judine earned a master's degree in psychology and counseling from Boulder Graduate School and became certified in Reiki, a form of natural healing through the use of energy.

Judine's special gift was the ability to feel her clients' bodily weaknesses within her own body. She used the transfer of energy through the laying on of hands to gently bring about physical and psychological well-being. In generous service, she freely offered her healing gifts to people with disabilities or in poor health.

Healing touch was such an integral part of Judine that she continued take the hands of visitors and pray a blessing for them even as her memory declined. Her gentle touch and loving understanding had a profound influence in the lives of her clients. One shared, "You should know that your life, your way of being in this world, has nourished my spiritual life . . . I would like to offer oceans of love and gratitude for your presence in my life."

Judine also was a gifted artist. Her art brought beauty into the world and truly expressed the prayerful, compassionate woman loved by so many.

Although her memory faded, her loveliness remained. She sparkled when art was mentioned and began to talk about how color and beauty are present in all of life. She believed that things done mindfully were a form of art, such as the little outdoor fountain behind her Colorado apartment that she decorated, or a meal presentation tastefully done.

The beautiful person inside of Judine radiated out through her bright blue eyes, her broad smile, and her tender spirit that remains with us. We rejoice that Judine, wholeness restored, is reunited with her deceased loved ones and now rests in the loving arms of God.