

# Sister Miriam Joseph Dolmovich

## May She Rest In Peace

### Financial skills led to Vatican, West Bank posts

Sunday, July 24, 2005

By Cindi Lash, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Sister Miriam Joseph Dolmovich, whose gift for handling financial matters led her from the North Side to religious posts at the Vatican and in the Holy Land, died of cancer Wednesday in the Sisters of Divine Providence provincial house, McCandless. She was 80.

During her career, Sister Miriam Joseph taught high school classes, worked to rescue one university from financial ruin and helped to start another. Unwilling to retire when she turned 65, she spent nearly 10 more years as treasurer for a community of Dominican sisters in Columbus, Ohio.

"Nuns don't retire -- they just keep on going," said Sister Joan Coultas, provincial director of the Sisters of Divine Providence. "She had such a good, critical mind."

The youngest of nine children, Sister Miriam Joseph was born Mary Dolmovich and grew up in Spring Hill. She attended St. Ambrose School and Annunciation High School on the North Side, then worked for seven years before entering the Sisters of Divine Providence in 1949.

Sister Miriam Joseph taught business classes from 1954 to 1957 at the former Divine Providence Academy in East Liberty and from 1957 to 1968 at St. Basil High School in Carrick.

While teaching others, she was a student herself, graduating in 1958 with a bachelor's degree in business education from Duquesne University.

During summer breaks from teaching, Sister Miriam Joseph studied at Notre Dame University and earned a master of business administration degree in 1962.

Women students were still a rarity at the university then and not all of the male business instructors were enthusiastic about having her there, Sister Joan said.

"Whoa, that was big, for her to be there," she said. "She went in there and showed them. She loved the school and she felt proud to be a graduate."

Sister Miriam Joseph's thesis, "The Effective Use of Womanpower in Business," was published in the 1974 issue of Catholic Business Education Review.

In 1968, Sister Miriam Joseph was sought out to work in fiscal management in the Vatican's Secretariat of State in Rome.

She spent a year there, then returned to Pittsburgh after the Sisters of Divine Providence asked her to take on the job of treasurer at La Roche College and to help the college avert a "near fiscal disaster," Sister Joan said.

Founded in 1963 to educate the sisters, La Roche had looming financial problems because it hadn't drawn enough students or made enough money to stay solvent, said Sister Joan, who was dean of students from

1971 to 1974 before becoming president in 1975. The school broadened its mission to admit lay women and, in 1970, men as well.

Sister Miriam Joseph's oversight of La Roche's finances and her knowledge about investments helped the college to flourish and to establish an endowment by the time she left in 1977, Sister Joan said. She spent a year directing the finances of The Pittsburgh Catholic newspaper, then became vice president of finance for newly founded Bethlehem University, an institution on the West Bank founded by Christian Brothers to teach Arab Christians.

"She was a very international person, and I think the North Hills became a little too small for her," Sister Joan said.

Conditions were volatile and tensions high between Israelis and Palestinians during the 11 years Sister Miriam Joseph spent in Bethlehem.

In letters to Sister Joan, she told of uprisings, of Israeli soldiers occupying the university in 1983 and of her desire to work for reconciliation, writing once that "being a Christian in the Holy Land is not a problem so much as a responsibility to work for peace."

In 1990, as she neared age 65, Sister Miriam Joseph returned to the United States. But after receiving an invitation from the Dominican community in Columbus, she spent the next nine years as its treasurer before finally retiring in 1999 and returning to the Divine Providence community.

Sister Miriam Joseph is survived by a brother, Edward Dolmovich of Shaler; two sisters, Ann Schad of the North Side and Frances Jessy of McCandless.

Visitation was from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m. on Sunday, 24 July 2005 and from noon to 3:30 p.m. Monday at the Providence Heights mother house. The funeral was at 4 p.m. Monday, 25 July 2005 in the Mother of Divine Providence chapel, 9000 Babcock Blvd., McCandless.

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