



**Remembering Sister Anna Mary (Alphonsus Ligouri)  
Waickman, IHM  
May 20, 1920 - Jan. 11, 2009**

Anna Mary Waickman was born on May 20, 1920, in Akron, Ohio, to Leo and Catherine (Gilhooly) Waickman. She was the eldest of four children, followed by Frank, Tom (who became a priest) and Paul. Throughout her life she remained very close to her brothers, as well as distance allowed. Paul, in particular, came often to Marygrove and spent two or three days and recently has come to the Motherhouse nearly every week to visit her.

Anna Mary says in her page from the Book of Life: "I want to give thanks for a loving, hard working and religious family. In this family I learned to pray and know about Our Lady—we said the family rosary together." (This exceptional devotion to the Blessed Mother has been a notable feature of her entire life.) She continues, "In this family I was taught to help and love others."

The Waickman home was near the railroad tracks, and during those depression days Mrs. Waickman would make sandwiches for the men the children called "hobos." But their mother told them, "No, these are working men who need food." The Waickman yard came to be marked by these grateful men as a place they could be sure to find something to eat. This was certainly a model for Anna Mary's outstanding graciousness and hospitality in the coming years.

The Waickman's were a family who believed in Catholic Education. Anna continues: "The IHM Sisters were my teachers for my first three years in grade school. They entered my life in a special way during second grade when Sister Ethelreda obtained permission for me to make my first Holy Communion two weeks early before my seventh birthday. As I look back, I realize how the IHM Sisters always knew how to negotiate."

For her later grade school years, Anna Mary attended St. Sebastian School. Since St. Sebastian did not have a high school, Anna Mary, with a number of her classmates, then became boarders at Villa Maria Academy in Pennsylvania.

After high school Anna Mary attended Marygrove College. Of her college years, she says, "Marygrove College years brought other turning points for me. As a history major Sister Rosalita taught me to see world history and events, to see how economics and politics influenced art and music and literature. She urged me to join the Sodality and go with groups to help the poor and to pray for peace." Anna Mary received her BA in 1942, with a major in history.

Then, with two brothers in the war and one in the Jesuits, she returned to Akron, Ohio, after graduation to work first in the circulation department of the *Akron Beacon Journal*, and then with her father's business, Truck Tire Service, a wholesale jobber to gasoline stations. Here as manager she showed her sharp business sense.

She entered the convent on Aug. 22, 1949, was received on Aug. 15, 1950, when she was given the name Alphonsus Ligouri, professed in 1952, and finally professed in 1955. Her first years of teaching were at St. Mary Academy, St. Thomas, Ann Arbor, and Marygrove College, Monroe. In August 1961 she received her master's degree in library science from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

She had already begun what would be 40 years of library work, both at Marygrove College and on the Monroe Campus. In 1961 she was missioned to Marygrove College, where she joined her long-time friend, Sister Claudia Carlen, in the Marygrove College Library.

Mention must be made here of Anna's great friendship with Claudia. She writes in her Book of Life, "My special friend and support in every turn of my life has been Sister Claudia Carlen. She brought me to the Marygrove College Library. She showed me how to help patrons, especially students. She helped me deepen my prayer life and love of Our Lady. She helped me understand that Jesus lives in every person, and how to help all who seek service find truth, peace and understanding."

During her years in the Marygrove College Library, Anna Mary developed and extended library services to students, faculty and researchers through the transition years from 1970 as student profile and needs changed, matching traditional values with active response to contemporary cultures.

Of the setting up of the new wing of the library (to which the Waickman family, incidentally, was a substantial donor), Anna Mary says, "I was here in 1962 when Sister Claudia orchestrated the girls moving 85,000 books into the new library. We began at 8:30 a.m. and by 3:30 p.m. all but the bound periodicals were moved."

Anna Mary was always available to help individual students, whatever their needs; she helped more than one sister student, who found the cost of her summer text too great, by purchasing the book for the library and letting the sister use it for the period of her course.

When the time came for the computerization of the library, Anna Mary did extensive research and attended several workshops, as her brother Paul tells us, to find the best and most cost-effective computers and software.

As her friend Georgianna Simon, a St. Joseph Sister and long-time colleague at Marygrove College, sums up, "Anna Mary was a librarian to the core. Her library evolved from that of a location where paper records or books can be accessed to one where all kinds of media are stored and offers the ability to remotely access numerous other sources. Just reflect what a change it must have been for her; training younger students who regarded the computer as an older person would a book. New training needed to be done so as to be able to initiate so many searches on the internet or in special databases for so many people, rather than just cataloging, ordering or referring to books."

In her Marygrove convent community life, Anna Mary continued as the servant she had learned in childhood to be. Mary Catherine Quick, IHM, who was house coordinator during the last years of the convent, remarked on her great kindness and graciousness. When Marygrove began hiring housekeepers from a service that found work for Polish immigrant women, she was extremely understanding and helpful to them in their difficulty with the English language and American ways.

She also helped in many ways around the house, and often could be found as the first sister to respond to a basement flood (and there were many!)

She was also a loyal daughter of the Church and joined in discussions of Church matters with evidence of thorough research into encyclicals and other documents.

Her greatest delight in her later years was in gatherings of her Prism mission unit and of fellow members of her profession class who live here at the Motherhouse. She often

contributed flowers and wine—and always her joyful self. (She LOVED a party!) And her continual reminder was, “Be good to yourself.”

Anna Mary, your work is done, and the Lord is saying: “Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.” In the words of Our Lady of Marygrove, we pray:

Gate of Heaven, throw thy portals wide;  
Queen of Angels, draw her to your side,  
when beyond life’s ever-changing tide,  
she leaves her Marygrove.

Written by Sister Rose Carmel Burgess, IHM  
Jan. 15, 2009