

In Memoriam

Fr. James H. Flanagan, SOLT

SOLT
Sisters
SPOTLIGHT



Dear friends,

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the passing of our beloved founder, Fr. James H. Flanagan, we give thanks for the gift of his life and the enduring vision he entrusted to us. His life was mysteriously woven into the liturgical life of the Church—born on Ascension Thursday in 1924 and entered eternal life on March 24, 2016, which that year was Holy Thursday (a date that in an ordinary year would be the vigil of the Feast of the Annunciation). These providential moments reflect the loves that shaped him so deeply: Our Lady, the priesthood, the Eucharist, and the Church.

Fr. Flanagan had a great missionary heart, longing to bring all people into communion with the Most Holy Trinity through a living relationship with God and through missionary teams of priests, religious, and laity serving together.

As SOLT Sisters, we remain deeply grateful for his witness and the gift of his vision. We are also sincerely thankful for you - our friends and benefactors - whose prayers, generosity, and participation make this mission possible. Together, we continue the work he loved so much: bringing souls into the loving communion of the Trinity.

In the Trinity,
Sr. Mary Aloysius Kim, SOLT
General Sister Servant



Everything Is Gift

One thing that always struck me about Fr. Flanagan was his ability to lift your thinking to a higher level. He had a way of seeing everything in the light of God's Providence. For example, while walking to the car, he once remarked, "This is the car that Our Lady gave us." If you asked how he was doing, he would often respond, "Just the way the Lord wants me to be." During petitions, if someone prayed for a particular person, he would gently broaden the intention to include others who might be carrying the same struggle. There are still certain phrases of his that I often quote in talks: "Everything is gift," "It's not what you do, but who you are," and his reminder that we are only on this earth "for about an hour." These simple expressions were reminders that we lived in the presence of God.

Sr. Mary Mediatrix of All Grace Patterson, SOLT



Do What You Do...

One of my favorite Fr. Jim memories is watching his patience, kindness, and presentness as he would serve lines of people who were waiting to talk to him. He was so present to each person in front of him. I can remember a SOLT family picnic in Robstown where he was patiently just taking time to listen and counsel people for hours even though his health was not that good at the time and it was a particularly hot day. I looked up at one point and little Jimmy Craig had waited in line to talk to him and was telling him knock, knock jokes which Fr. Jim was thoroughly enjoying. Fr. Jim used to tell us: "Do what you do while you are doing it." He was an amazing example of doing just that, in the way he was present to each person.

Sr. MaryAnn Richwald, SOLT



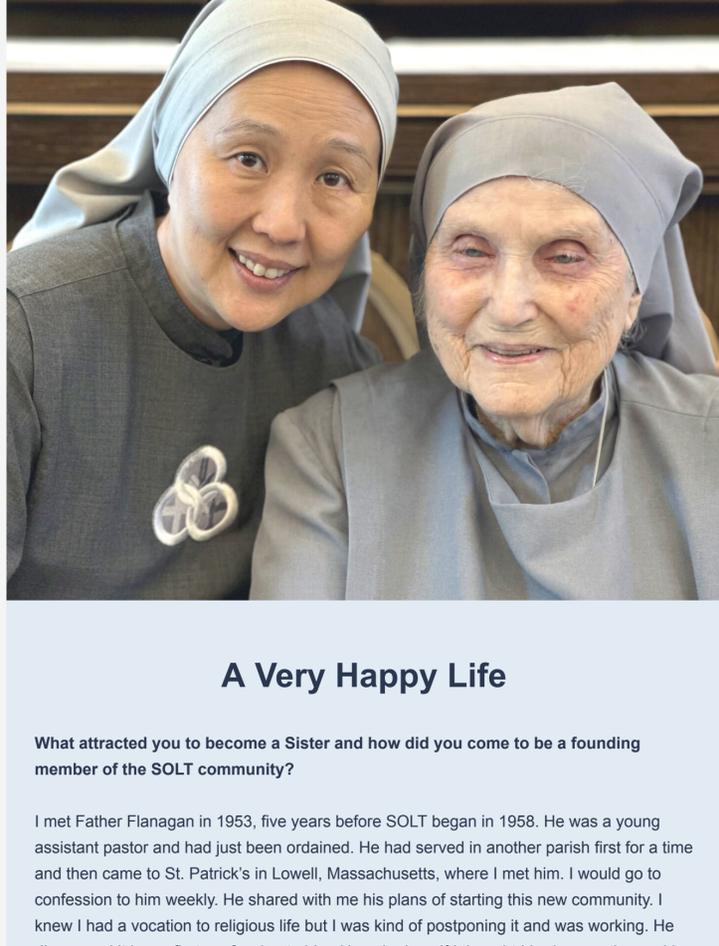
A Treasured Memory

I professed my First Vows in July of 2015. It was the last First Vows Mass that Father James Flanagan attended before his death, and so it was the last time that he would choose a Sister's new name for her, before that privilege passed to our current General Sister Servant. I had written my letter of request to Fr. Jim, explaining a few names that I had been praying with in my novitiate. However, at the end of my letter, I wrote, "I'm not absolutely convicted that any of these are supposed to be my name, so in the end, you can choose." In my Profession shortly after, my Baptismal name was given back to me: "Sr. Mary Rachel." I talked to Fr. Jim after the Mass and he told me, "Sis, it was very clear to me that that was supposed to be your name. It was so clear that I think Jesus must have loved that name!" This is one of my most treasured memories with our Founder.

Sr. Mary Rachel Craig, SOLT

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A Very Happy Life

What attracted you to become a Sister and how did you come to be a founding member of the SOLT community?

I met Father Flanagan in 1953, five years before SOLT began in 1958. He was a young assistant pastor and had just been ordained. He had served in another parish first for a time and then came to St. Patrick's in Lowell, Massachusetts, where I met him. I would go to confession to him weekly. He shared with me his plans of starting this new community. I knew I had a vocation to religious life but I was kind of postponing it and was working. He discovered it in my first confession to him. He asked me if I thought I had a vocation and I said, "Yes, but I'm waiting."

Father Flanagan had already received from God an understanding that he was to found a community of priests, religious and laity, all three. So, in my first confession to him he asked me if I had a vocation to religious life, so the spiritual friendship and spiritual direction began right at that time. I was in my early twenties.

Do you have a favorite story?

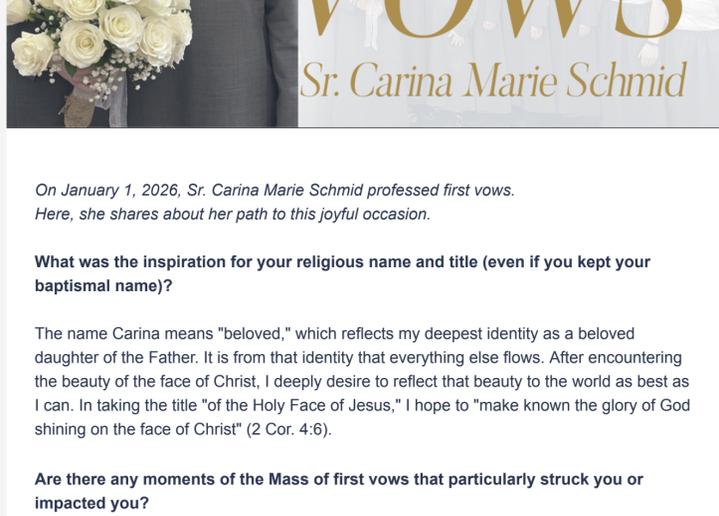
I go back really to meeting the founder because I think that was the key. And it certainly opened the door to a wonderful life in obedience to God. It's a very happy life when we are obedient to God and God's will. I think sometimes people look for something outside, but we know that God's interior calling is a tremendous blessing to just a few of us in this world. To be faithful to that is what really makes us happy...Happiness and peace comes from that oneness with Christ.

Here at the Motherhouse, your vocation is especially steeped in prayer, adoration and Mass. How do you see yourself bringing the grace of God to people in the world today through your vocation now?

I think the primary work is that of union of Christ; of prayer. Christ shows us the details.

Sr. Mary of the Redemption, SOLT

*This is an excerpt from an article that was first published by SOAR (Support Our Aging Religious).
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First VOWS

Sr. Carina Marie Schmid

On January 1, 2026, Sr. Carina Marie Schmid professed first vows. Here, she shares about her path to this joyful occasion.

What was the inspiration for your religious name and title (even if you kept your baptismal name)?

The name Carina means "beloved," which reflects my deepest identity as a beloved daughter of the Father. It is from that identity that everything else flows. After encountering the beauty of the face of Christ, I deeply desire to reflect that beauty to the world as best as I can. In taking the title "of the Holy Face of Jesus," I hope to "make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

Are there any moments of the Mass of first vows that particularly struck you or impacted you?

One of the most beautiful moments of the Mass for me was after receiving communion when the choir was singing the "Ave Maris Stella" by Mark Thomas. A previous music director at my home parish in Boulder, CO, Mark Thomas, wrote that piece, so I heard it at Mass often throughout my life. As I was praying after communion, I was reflecting in awe at the goodness and faithfulness of Our Lord. I was filled with gratitude in seeing how He has been with me and guided me through all the years of my life leading up to this beautiful moment of religious profession that I had so long desired.

What was the experience like to finally make this step of first vows?

I initially felt called to religious life when I was in middle school and then experienced a renewed sense of the call when I was in college and so much desired to enter right away. However, I finished school and then worked for a year to pay off my student loans, so it felt like a long time of waiting before I entered aspirancy. My desire to profess vows grew throughout formation, but sometimes the reality of religious profession still seemed far off. So, in the days surrounding first vows, I just kept saying, "I can't believe it's actually happening!" To make this step of first vows was glorious!

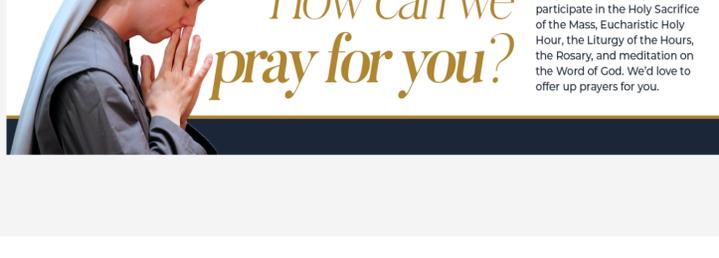
What would your advice be to a young woman considering religious life?

There were a couple of things that were particularly helpful to me in my discernment:

1. Remember that Our Lord wants you to be happy and *He loves you so much*. He will call you to whatever vocation will be the absolute best for you, and where you will be happy. He desires to and will fulfill the desires He has placed in your heart!
2. Don't be afraid to take small steps forward in your discernment. A priest once told me "You can't steer a ship that isn't moving. Just take small steps forward in one direction, and if you're going a little bit off course, the Lord will steer you back in the right direction."

Sr. Carina Marie of the Holy Face of Jesus, SOLT

Prayer Request



How can we pray for you?

Daily as a community, we participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Eucharistic Holy Hour, the Liturgy of the Hours, the Rosary, and meditation on the Word of God. We'd love to offer up prayers for you.