



Maria G. Saltijeral

October 10, 1939 - June 29, 2026

In Loving Memory of Maria G. "Mary" Saltijeral

October 10, 1939 – June 29, 2026

With profound sadness and deep gratitude for a life so beautifully lived, we announce the passing of Maria G. "Mary" Saltijeral, who entered into the loving arms of our Lord on June 29, 2026, at the age of 86.

Beloved wife. Loving mother. Proud grandmother and great-grandmother. Faithful servant of God. The heart of her family and a friend to all.

Mary devoted her life to God, her husband, her children, her community, and her family. She believed every person deserved to be welcomed with dignity, every family deserved hope, and every home should always have room for one more. She was the heart of her home, a woman whose quiet strength, unwavering faith, and unconditional love touched everyone who knew her. Her greatest joy was never found in material things, but in gathering those she loved around the table, sharing a meal, telling stories, and reminding each person that family was life's greatest blessing.

She was the beloved wife of Miguel A. "Mike" Saltijeral, with whom she shared more than fifty years of marriage. Together they built a family rooted in faith, compassion, hospitality, and service, leaving behind a legacy that continues to bless future generations.

Mary often said that everything she became began with the example set by her own parents. She grew up in a home where love was abundant, respect was expected, and no one was ever turned away from the table. Those

lessons became the foundation of the life she built with Miguel.

Together, Mary and Mike quietly lived a life of faith in action. Their home became a place where family, friends, neighbors, priests, bishops, and religious sisters were always welcome. There was always another chair to pull up to the table and another plate to serve. Thanksgiving was never simply a family meal. Friends of their children, neighbors, and anyone who needed a place to belong found a home with the Saltijeral family.

They believed faith was something you lived every day. If a neighbor was hungry, groceries came from their own pantry. If someone needed encouragement, they gave their time. If a family needed guidance, they opened their home. They quietly helped countless Hispanic families find hope, navigate the path to American citizenship, and build a better future because they believed serving others was simply what God called them to do.

Mary's heart for service reached far beyond her own family. During a time when very few Spanish-speaking resources existed in Aurora, she became a trusted voice for countless Hispanic families. She served as the Spanish liaison for the Catholic churches on Aurora's east side, helping families communicate with priests, prepare for the sacraments, and find support when there was nowhere else to turn. So many clergy came to rely on her that they would simply give families her home telephone number and say, "Call Mary. She'll help you." And she always did.

Mary also made history as Aurora's first Mexican American Queen, representing her culture with grace, dignity, and pride during a time when Hispanic traditions were not yet widely embraced. Alongside Miguel, she helped organize one of Aurora's first Hispanic parades, creating opportunities for families to celebrate their heritage while helping build a stronger, more welcoming community for generations to come.

Yet Mary never sought recognition for any of these accomplishments. She simply saw people who needed someone to listen, someone to guide them, and someone willing to stand beside them. Her life's work was never about

titles or honors. It was about opening doors for others, just as she had always opened the door to her own home.

The lessons Mary and Miguel taught their children were never spoken as lectures. They were lived every day. Love your family. Welcome the stranger. Respect every person. Share what you have. Leave people better than you found them. That example became one of Mary's greatest gifts to her family and remains her enduring legacy.

Mary was the proud and devoted mother of Suzy (Eddie) Banuelos, Michael (Esther) Saltijeral, Sandi Saltijeral (Vince Galvan), David (Heidi) Saltijeral, Gabriel Saltijeral, and Hugo (Jessica) Saltijeral.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Miguel A. "Mike" Saltijeral; her loving parents, Juan and Hortencia (Arevalo) Gonzalez; her cherished son, Robert Saltijeral; and her beloved grandsons, Nico Contreras and Justin Saltijeral.

She was a proud grandmother to Alyssa (Isabel) Ocon, Alex Banuelos, Alyson Banuelos, Jonathan (Mariana) Silva, Jessica (Matthew) LaCosse, Amanda (Ivan) Magaña, Jason (Marisol) Contreras, Araceli (Maria) Flores, Kristina Contreras, David Saltijeral Jr. (Kasia), Taylor Saltijeral, Samantha Saltijeral, Elijah Saltijeral, Roberto Barrera, Robert Ruiz-Saltijeral, Julio Saltijeral, Angel Saltijeral, Gabriel Saltijeral II, Sofia Gabriela Saltijeral, Hugo Saltijeral Jr. (Megan), Anthony Saltijeral, and Peyton Saltijeral. She also lovingly embraced Yadria Arroyo as her forever daughter-in-law, holding her and her family close to her heart. Mary was further blessed with her treasured great-grandchildren Santiago, Eliel, Violet, Stefen, Theo, Elliot, Ellena, Aaron, and Amelia, each one bringing her endless joy.

To Mary, family was never defined only by blood. If you walked through her front door, you became family. There was always another place at the table, another meal to share, another story to tell, and another heart to welcome. Her greatest hope was that her family would remain close, care for one another, and continue to love each other through every season of life.

Those who knew Mary will remember her gentle spirit, generous heart, warm smile, and steadfast faith. She found joy in serving others, comfort in prayer, and purpose in loving without conditions. She never sought recognition for the lives she touched. She simply believed that when God placed someone in her path, you helped them. Her life was not measured by the years she lived, but by the lives she lifted.

While our hearts are broken, we find peace knowing Mary has been reunited with her beloved Miguel, her son Robert, her grandsons Nico and Justin, her parents, and so many loved ones who went before her. Perhaps the greatest gift Mary left her family was expressed in her own words: "I teach my kids to love each other because in life, that's all you have, your family." We can only imagine that as Mary entered the gates of Heaven, she was welcomed by the love of her life with the same words Mike spoke to everyone who crossed the threshold of their home: "Thank God... you're home." And now she is. May she rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

Visitation will be held on Thursday, July 2, 2026, from 3:00 PM until 7:00 PM with a Liturgical Wake Service at 4:00 PM at DALEIDEN MORTUARY, 220 North Lake Street, Aurora, Illinois 60506. 630-631-5500

Funeral services will be held on Friday, July 3, 2026, at 9:30 AM from DALEIDEN MORTUARY to St. Joseph Church at 10:00 AM; Fr. Jerome Leake will officiate with interment at St. Joseph Cemetery.

Please visit our interactive website at www.daleidenmortuary.com where you may sign the guest book or leave condolences for Maria's family.

Arrangements entrusted to Daleiden Mortuary, Aurora, Illinois – providing funeral and cremation services to Aurora, Montgomery, Sugar Grove, Oswego, Batavia, Yorkville and surrounding communities.

Cemetery Details

St. Joseph Cemetery

Corner of Rt. 25 and Indian Trail Road.
Aurora, IL

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUL 2. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Daleiden Mortuary
220 N. Lake Street
Aurora, IL 60506
(630) 631-5500
daleidenmortuary@gmail.com
<https://www.daleidenmortuary.com>

Wake Service

JUL 2. 4:00 PM (CT)

Daleiden Mortuary
220 N. Lake Street
Aurora, IL 60506
(630) 631-5500
daleidenmortuary@gmail.com
<https://www.daleidenmortuary.com>

Morning Prayers

JUL 3. 9:30 AM (CT)

Daleiden Mortuary
220 N. Lake Street
Aurora, IL 60506
(630) 631-5500
daleidenmortuary@gmail.com
<https://www.daleidenmortuary.com>

Funeral Mass

JUL 3. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Joseph Church
722 High Street
Aurora, IL 60505
1-630-844-7380

Burial

JUL 3 (CT)

St. Joseph Cemetery
Corner of Rt. 25 and Indian Trail Road.
Aurora, IL

Tribute Wall

LP

“ *What a beautiful woman and legacy. My condolences to your family on the loss of this family/community treasure. My wife and I were Hugo’s CCD teachers at St. Joes and I worked with Johnny “Salti” Saltijeral at APD. God’s Blessings to all.*

Lloyd Popp - 1 hour ago