

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. Mary Barbara Agnew

(Sister M. Madeleva)

BORN: April 1925

ENTERED CONGREGATION: February 2, 1949

DIED: October 8, 2016

**W**e gather here today to celebrate the life of Sister Barbara Agnew who was a Sister of the Precious Blood for 67 years.

Mary Barbara Agnew was born in Dayton, Ohio in April 1925 to Walter Ignatius Agnew and Marie Katherine Weiser. She is survived by numerous nieces, nephews and friends. Barbara's family moved from Dayton to Cincinnati which gave her the opportunity to attend St. Mark's Grade School and Regina High School where the Sisters of the Precious Blood had a great influence on her.

After graduating from Edgecliff College in Cincinnati and teaching in the Cincinnati Public Schools for one year, Barbara entered the Congregation on February 2, 1949 and was given the name Sister Mary Madeleva.

Barbara continued her teaching career at Good Counsel School, Cleveland; St. Joseph High School, Wapakoneta and Regina High School, Cincinnati, Ohio. She furthered her studies and graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a Masters in Arts and later from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC with a Doctor of Philosophy degree.

In 1976, she was awarded two National Endowment for the Humanities grants which entitled her to study at the Divin-

ity Schools of the University of Chicago and Harvard. Barbara wrote many articles in various publications, delivered numerous papers on different aspects of theology, served on panels and committees and was involved in many professional activities.

After serving 30 years in teaching, writing and doing research as a theologian and faculty member of Villanova University in Villanova, Pa., she retired from the Department of Theology and Religious studies in 1999. A reception was given in recognition of her loyal and loving service not only to the university but to the entire Villanova community.

After a lifetime spent as a teacher, retirement took her quite beyond where academia had ever led, namely to efforts at faith-formation in the parish, literacy training in city prisons, and working in a residence of formerly homeless men and women.

Barbara was an avid reader of newspapers and journals. She loved to interact with others to discuss different areas of theology and issues in the church. Barbara would often give others articles to read and loved it when they got back to her with comments or let her know how much they appreciated the article.

When Barbara celebrated her 60th Jubilee, she said, "I have often thought that I would not want to have been born

at any other time: I had an excellent formation in the best of the "old church" and wonderful training and experience in the church after Vatican II."

On a personal level, one of the Sisters said, "I really felt close to Barbara and was happy that she accepted my invitation to play cards with my card group. She was fun to have in our group." She and Barbara helped each other out in many small ways which made them both happy.

Another noticed how much it touched Barbara when a Sister put her arm around her after her sister Anne died. She commented on how much it meant to Barbara when she was asked to put the table napkins around in the dining room; this made Sister Barbara feel like she was contributing to the community.

In the recent months, Barbara reminisced about her high school years at Regina. She was always pleased when the other Sisters who attended Regina enjoyed sharing similar memories.

Gradually Barbara's health was deteriorating, so in September she was moved to Cypress Pointe Health Campus in order to receive additional care. Sister Barbara, thank you for the many gifts you shared with the human family. May you rest in eternal peace.

— **Sister Cecilia Taphorn, CPPS**