

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Mary Louise Barhorst

(Sister Mary Hilary)

BORN: April 1927

ENTERED CONGREGATION: August 13, 1942

DIED: June 4, 2013

On the occasion of her 50th Anniversary as a Sister of the Precious Blood, our dear Sister Mary Lou wrote, "Being a member of the Congregation provides me with the realization that I am joined with Sisters who are so committed to service of Our Spouse and others through our devotion to His Precious Blood that we can say we are truly His. For this I am so grateful, and it is with this sense of gratitude that I praise Him...and ask God to continue to bless my community, my family, and my friends during the years to come."

In April 1927 Louise Cecilia Barhorst was the youngest of five children born to Louis and Caroline (Prenger) Barhorst. Their family farm was adjacent to St. Patrick Church and rectory. Later in life she wrote, "Having been born in the small hamlet of St. Patrick, Ohio, a town of 60 Catholic families, a public school where all the teachers were Catholic and the pastor with his housekeeper, who would play ball with us after school, the idea of becoming a Sister never occurred to me. But God has His own way of making His Call heard."

When she was just three years old, her mother died in childbirth and Louise's family, especially her dad, became even more special. When she was ten years old God saw fit to call her beloved father to Himself. After their farm was sold she lived with an uncle and aunt in Botkins, Ohio, where she was taught by the Sisters of the Precious Blood. She loved school and the Sisters but was happy to move later on to Sidney, Ohio, to live with her married brother and attend Holy Angels High School

taught by the Sisters of Charity. While there she was approached by a Sister who told her she thought she had a religious vocation and invited her to visit the Sisters of Charity motherhouse in Cincinnati. Louise felt embarrassed and angry, and adamantly refused the invitation. However later on she did think and pray about it and on August 13, 1942, entered the Precious Blood community, realizing God had shown her the way.

After professing vows in 1945 Sister Mary Hilary, as she was called before returning to her baptismal name, was sent to teach in Arizona where she spent most of her years in ministry. Throughout 46 years Sister Mary Louise ministered in education, first teaching students in grades 3 through 8 in Mesa and Phoenix, Arizona and Denver, Colorado. She also served as principal in some of the schools. From 1960 on Sister taught Catholic high school students at Regina and Carroll high schools in Ohio; at St. Mary, Gerard and Salpointe high schools in Arizona; and Central Catholic in Indiana. Beginning in 1970 Sister also served as a guidance counselor. In 1976 she branched out to the Public School System at Arizona's Casa Grande Union High School as Counselor and Department Chairperson until 1992.

Her many educational colleagues said, "Sister Mary Louise is a 'take charge' person in the best sense of the word. She is organized, efficient, and dedicated but also understanding, sympathetic and deeply religious." Another praised Sister saying, "Professionally, Sister...is an excellent teacher, academically as well as in

her wonderful way of dealing with the kids. She was popular with them because she understood them and knew the right response to their adolescent needs." Sister retired from educational ministry in 1992.

"In religious life," her Sisters in community said, "her prayerfulness and dedication are an inspiration to those around her. She is always there for her Sisters. She has always responded with a resounding 'yes' to Our Lord's directives throughout her religious life." To many she was a friend, companion, advisor and caregiver and a person who shared in joys and sorrows, lifting others up with her warmth and friendly personality.

The first part of her retirement was in Chandler, Arizona and Lebanon, Ohio, where she volunteered in parish ministry and enjoyed gardening, cooking, and traveling. "What the future brings," said Sister Mary Lou, "is in God's hands. He will be there for me as I continue to dedicate myself to Him through His Precious Blood."

In October of 2009 Sister retired at Salem Heights convent in Dayton, Ohio, where she loved others well and was loved well by her Sisters and her Barhorst family. Sister Mary Lou was called to eternity by her God on June 4, 2013. Hers was a gentle life of caring dedication, ministry, and growth in her relationship with her God. She had told us, "What I am is God's gift to me; what I become is my gift to God." We thank you and love you, Sister Mary Lou, because you also have been gift to us.

— Sister Nancy Kinross