

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Elaine Mildred Becker

BORN: April 1946

ENTERED CONGREGATION: July 20, 1969

DIED: December 23, 2015

Our Sister Elaine was called home. She is with her mother and dad, some of her good friends, and with the Lord whom she loved and served. We will miss her wonderful smile, her silly laugh, and her gentle presence.

Elaine was born in April 1946 to Mildred (Berkemeyer) and Edward Becker. She was baptized at St. John's Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. Elaine did not have any siblings but that did not stop her from a happy childhood. Like in adult life she smiled and laughed a lot.

After grade school, Elaine attended Regina High School in Norwood, Ohio. She graduated from Regina in 1964. Elaine liked to write and it was at Regina and then later in college that Elaine honed her skills as a writer. Elaine contributed many articles for newsletters and other publications for her Congregation and as part of her various ministries.

In 1967, Elaine responded to the Lord's call to serve him in a very unique way. She entered the cloistered community of the Sisters of the Precious Blood at Our Lady of Nativity Monastery in New Riegel, Ohio, and on July 20, 1969, she professed her vows as a Sister of the Precious Blood. For the next several years Elaine lived with the other Sisters in the cloister where she spent her day in prayer, contemplation, and working in the print shop. She once wrote, "I am grateful for the eleven years that I spent in the contemplative life. They taught me prayer."

Elaine, always attentive to the workings of the Lord in her life made another major decision in 1978. She discerned to be an active member of the Congregation. It is hard for us today to imagine how hard of a decision this had to be for Elaine.

Because she entered the Congregation through the cloister she did not have the opportunity to know many Sisters in the larger community. Elaine wrote that "it was a very difficult and scary adjustment to come into the active community, but the Sisters of the Precious Blood were so welcoming and warm that I soon felt at home in the active life."

In the years that followed this decision to be an active member of the Congregation, Elaine served the people of God, faithfully, graciously, and generously in a number of places. Mostly she ministered as a pastoral associate or a coordinator of religious education and at one point she was an assistant director in the Office of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Many of these years were spent living and working at various parishes in Cincinnati. Elaine loved Cincinnati. And in these last years when she was living in Dayton she always enjoyed going back to her roots in Cincinnati.

In 2013, Elaine was asked by our Congregation to be the coordinator for the care of Sisters living at the Maria Joseph Center, a skilled nursing facility, here in Dayton. In this position, she listened to the Sisters concerns, advocated for their care, was with them when they went to the hospital, she prayed with them, and of course she partied with them. Most importantly she was at their bedside when they made their last journey home to their loving God.

Elaine loved to read, her spare bedroom was filled with books. She gardened, collected clown memorabilia, and did counted cross stitch. She also was a good friend, and liked to spend time with her friends. If you knew Elaine then you also know that she suffered from chronic pain for much of her adult life. However,

this pain and the many surgeries she endured did not stop her from facing each day with determination and joy.

A friend of Elaine's wrote the following, "Some people write poems; some people ask questions: what do you call someone with boundless energy who is almost always smiling, willing to do whatever is necessary to get the job done, and always ready to go out to lunch? What do you call someone who can listen, brainstorm ideas, enjoy a good joke, and quickly get ready to go out to lunch? What do you call someone with a strong sense of community, a contagious spirituality, and the readiness to pray, party, or go out to lunch? And what do you call someone committed to the stewardship of the land, conservation of the environment, the principles of social justice, the idea that one vacation a summer is not enough, and anyone's suggestion that we go out to lunch? Well, we call her Sister Elaine." I think this is an apt description of Elaine, particularly the part about "contagious spirituality." Elaine's interior life was very active and I think intense. But a person only found that out by spending time with her, one on one.

For many of us the circumstances of Elaine's death are hard to fathom, to come to terms with, to wonder was there something more I could or should have done. I think if Elaine was in our shoes she would say; stop beating yourselves up, I'm okay; the Lord knew exactly what He was doing so don't try reason the events out. I'm reunited with my family, my friends, and I am with my God, what more could I want. So celebrate my new life at the table of the Eucharist and then let's all go to lunch!

— Sister Linda Pleiman