

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Alma Catherine Huelskamp

(Sister M. Theophila)

BORN: February 1925

ENTERED CONGREGATION: August 14, 1942

DIED: March 13, 2010

This liturgy celebrates the memory of Sister Alma Catherine. We imagine her smile of genuine pleasure to have all of you gathered today, especially her sisters Millie and Sister Luella, and her brother Art. We are pleased that each of you, family members, friends, and representatives of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, can join us today.

Alma Huelskamp was the fourth of nine children, five girls and four boys born to Aloysius and Rose (Harlett) Huelskamp in St. Joseph, Ohio, in February 1925. Alma was only 10 when her mother died following the birth of the youngest boy, Eugene. The family pulled together and, along with her brothers and sisters, Alma learned to give and take, to love, care and share. Throughout her life she remained a generous person, always looking out for others in need.

In the summer of 1941 Alma was invited to work at Brunnerdale Seminary along with Leona Fullenkamp. Both of them enjoyed the work so much that they received permission to continue during the school year instead of finishing high school. Some time during that year Alma decided to enter the Sisters of the Precious Blood. She and Leona entered on the same day, August 14, 1942, both of them making the trip in the same car with their fathers. Some 30 years later, while at St. Thomas Seminary, Sister Alma finished high

school through correspondence courses from the University of Nebraska.

As a novice Alma was given the name Sister M. Theophila, but chose to go back to her baptismal name when that option was given. Since there was already another Sister Alma she added Catherine to her name, choosing St. Catherine Laboure as her patron since that saint had also done kitchen work. However, to most of us she continued to be "Sister Alma."

Throughout her 57 years of ministry, Sister Alma served primarily as a cook, a job we are told she did very well. Her mission list included St. Gregory Seminary, the residences of Bishop George Rehring and Archbishop John McNicholas, St. Joseph College in Rensselaer, Indiana, 18 years at St. Charles Seminary in Carthagena, Ohio, and 28 years at St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, Colorado. She was held in high regard by the seminarians, priests and brothers wherever she served, a true daughter of Mother Brunner. When she left St. Thomas Seminary, she was given a special commendation and replica of the seminary in appreciation for her years there.

Sister Alma also served the elderly at the Maria Joseph Home, here in Dayton, St. Vincent's Home in Ligonier, Indiana, and at Kneipp Springs in Rome City, Indiana. The many dietary management certificates in Sister Alma's files bear witness to the quality she sought to

bring to her ministry.

In reflecting on Sister Alma's years at St. Charles Seminary, her last place of ministry, one of her companions wrote: "She is generous in giving of herself and her time for others. She is a pleasant person who is lots of fun to be with. She is prayerful. She loves to read, take walks, crochet, and do needlework and crossword puzzles. Since she is near her home, she spends her day off with her sister [Millie] making comforters and quilts for the poor."

Sister Alma retired to Salem Heights in 2002 where she continued to be the same pleasant person she was throughout her years of active ministry. In November of 2009, various health issues led her to make the decision to move to Emma Hall in the Maria-Joseph Living Care Center. Little did we know her time there would be so brief.

In the past few months, her health deteriorated to the point where she freely admitted to being tired, and visitors frequently found her sleeping. However, when awake, she could still smile. We believe that, in her last few days, God was especially present to this woman who served him and others so well during her 85 years. With her last breath, Sister Alma gave herself over once again, and forever, to the God in whose arms she now rests.

— Sister Jeanette Buehler