

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. Petronia Krietemeyer

BORN: October 1910

ENTERED CONGREGATION: November 10, 1930

DIED: July 29, 2007

**T**ODAY we celebrate the life of Sister Petronia Krietemeyer, whose presence and love graced this world for 96 years and who shared our life as a Sister of the Precious Blood for 76 years. We extend our sympathy to her nieces and nephews who join us today in this Eucharistic celebration.

In October 1910, Anna Matilda was born to John and Agnes (Wallen) Krietemeyer in Ottoville, Ohio. She was the eighth child in a family of 11 children, five boys and six girls. On Nov. 10, 1930, at the age of 20, she entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood. When asked about how or why she came to the convent she would say that she had a mind of her own and that no one influenced her. Upon becoming a novice she received the name of Sister Mary Petronia.

Sister Petronia's ministry of service was quite varied. For 30 years she worked at institutions where there were elementary and high school students. She spent 20 years at Little Flower Academy near San Luis Rey Mission in California, and 10 years at Central Catholic High School in Lafayette, Ind. For 17 years she ministered in institutions serving priests and seminarians. She helped at Mount St. Mary Seminary in Cincinnati; St. Joseph College in Rensselaer, Ind.; at St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, and at the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Our own sisters benefited from her service and gracious presence at our convents in Linton, N.D., Ottoville, Ohio,

and Littleton, Colo., as well as at our motherhouse. In 1987 Sister Petronia retired to Salem Heights. There her greatest joy, besides the time for prayer, was her work in the garden. Many a flower found its way to decorating our chapel. In 2002 failing health necessitated her retirement to Emma Hall, where she died on Sunday, July 29, a little before noon.

Sister Petronia had two special gifts: her sense of humor and her beautiful smile. Even up until her last days she was able to smile at those who came to see her. She loved to tease and, with her dry wit, she kept you guessing what she might say next. She was a very pleasant person who maintained a calm presence. She herself said she had a mind of her own. Her caregivers preferred to say that she was determined and persistent. If she wanted something she couldn't be redirected to consider something else. Before her 75th jubilee she wanted to practice walking so that she could process into chapel. She would sit outside Sister Jean René Hoying's office saying, "It's time to practice!"

Until I moved into Orchard House I was unaware of another gift she had. As you may know, many of the paintings that decorate our walls have been done by our sisters. Among those works is a painting by Sister Petronia—a painting of flowers, of course! During her ministry at Lafayette, Ind., she took time to take some art lessons which helped her to develop this talent.

A favorite ministry experience shared at the time of her 75th anniversary in religious life occurred when she was

"Cookie's assistant." Cookie was the affectionate name given to Sister Callista DeBolt. They served 1,200 meals of spaghetti at the annual Home Fair held at Home Hospital in Lafayette. Surprisingly, when the tired cooks sat down to enjoy their meal after everyone had been served, they discovered that it really was good spaghetti. What a feat it was for those two sisters and their helpers to have served so many, so well!

Sister Petronia began preparing for her death about six months ago by cleaning out her things, giving them away because she had enough. Approximately two weeks before she died she wanted to go to confession and she wanted help preparing for it. She said to Sister Nancy Recker, "Come here, tell me." Sister Nancy wanted to know what she wanted her to tell her. Sister Petronia replied, "Tell me what to do." Sister Nancy began to explain that she should go and tell the priest her sins. Sister Petronia replied, "And then what?" Sister Nancy finally caught on and asked if Sister Petronia wanted some suggestions of possible sins which, of course, is what she wanted. Nancy began offering suggestions, such as whether she had been impatient, whether she had been unkind. With that, Sister Petronia interrupted her and in her dry humor said, "I've got enough now!" and walked away.

Sister Petronia, all of us who knew you will miss the smile on your face, the twinkle in your eye and, of course, your dry wit. May you know Eternal Joy after sharing so much with so many.

—Sister Edna Hess