

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Mary Ignatius Lichtle

BORN: July 1928

ENTERED CONGREGATION: July 1, 1945

DIED: April 10, 2011

HELEN Rose Lichtle was born to Isadore and Eulalia (Imber) Lichtle in June 1928 in Fostoria, Ohio. She was the middle child of 13, with three sisters and three brothers older and three brothers and three sisters younger. She called herself the “bridge.” Today Helen Rose is survived by two brothers and three sisters.

Along with her busy life on the family farm, Helen Rose received her spiritual nourishment at St. Boniface Church in New Riegel, Ohio. Following in the footsteps of her cousins, Sisters Leandra and Gertrude Ann Droll, Helen Rose entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood on July 1, 1945, and as a novice was given the name Sister Mary Ignatius. She received a B. S. in education degree from the University of Dayton.

Sister Ignatius began her ministry as an elementary school teacher at St. Mary’s School in Phoenix, Ariz., and Assumption School in Dayton, Ohio. Hearing of the community’s interest in starting a mission in Chile, South America, Sister Ignatius’s energy was peaked. She was very happy when chosen to be one of the first four sisters to start this first foreign mission of the Sisters of the Precious Blood.

After teaching for five years at St. Gasper School in Santiago, Chile, she became overseer for the renovation of the Santa Inés property purchased for use as a novitiate house. It was here that Ignatius applied her skills of carpentry, lawn and garden arranging as well as becoming a “doctor of transplants”— that is of trees, of course. She made lawn chairs from the crates used to ship items to Chile on their maiden

voyage and they are still being used by the sisters today.

Life was not all work for Sister Ignatius: She organized many cookouts at Santa Inés and these always included dancing. After 14 years in Chile, Ignatius returned to the United States with a reputation of being a “handywoman.” Armed with her trusty tool box Sister Ignatius was ready to create, teach, repair, plant or uproot!

Her dedication in helping to establish the Early Childhood Center in Fatima Hall by building numerous instructional tools as well as creations with which the children could play was one of her outstanding achievements. It was here that she received the nickname “Ignace,” as it was easier for the children to pronounce. Her handiwork did not stop here. It can be found in an Early Childhood Center in Arlington, Va.; in a Puerto Rican center in Geneva, N.Y.; in two homes for Catholic Workers in Rochester, N.Y.; and in a food pantry in Germantown, Pa.

Sister Ignatius’s skill of bringing joy to the lives of others was fulfilled in her ministry of being hostess and activities representative at an area McDonald’s for 13 years. Old and new customers came to “her” McDonald’s to experience her personal charm and special customer attention. She rose quickly to a star rating.

Sister Ignatius believed that Jesus ministered where the people were, so in imitation of him, she strove to do the same. To each of her ministries she gave her very best, believing that it is not what you do that counts but how you do it.

Work was a major part of Ignatius’s life

but she also enjoyed exploring nature, creating artistic displays and keeping up on current events. Surpassing these was her faithfulness to prayer. She believed it is important to put first things first, and prayer was a first. As I was visiting her one day and we were finishing our conversation she ended by reminding me that being connected with God is our most important task. Even though I had heard similar words before, hers stayed with me. Knowing that Ignatius had many struggles during her life, her words spoke of deep faith and trust in God’s mercy which is renewed each day.

McDonald’s was not the only place where Ignatius earned a star rating. Sister Marguerite Wendell, CPPS, her history teacher in 1945, claimed her as a star pupil; on Ignatius’s 50th anniversary as a Sister of the Precious Blood, Marguerite wrote:

To My Star Pupil

*You’re a very Special Person,
Born to be a Star,
To shine with love and care,
On people everywhere.*

*As we celebrate today,
These fifty years of love,
A special prayer I’ll say
To the loving God above.*

*“Bless my Star and let her shine,
On every road she climbs,
Until she reaches that heavenly place,
And sees God’s Sacred Face.”*

Ignatius, Marguerite’s prayer has been answered. Rest in peace in God’s embrace!

—Sister Madonna Ratermann