

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. Eileen Monnin

(Sister M. Emerentia)

BORN: March 1925

ENTERED CONGREGATION: July 26, 1940

DIED: April 30, 2008

**A**MONG the many things Sister Eileen enjoyed in life was being with people. And so, in her name, I welcome you and thank you for your presence at this funeral liturgy. The prayers of our Precious Blood community are especially with her sister, Marge, her brother, Tony, and other family and friends gathered here today.

Mary Eileen was the third child born to Albert and Eva (Didier) Monnin, in Russia, Ohio. Two brothers, Lloyd and Robert, preceded her; three other siblings followed her: her sister, Marge, and two more brothers, Frank and Tony. The family grew up on a farm and Eileen spoke of many fun and adventurous times.

At the age of 15 Eileen decided to enter the Sisters of the Precious Blood, who staffed the public grade school in Russia. While other postulants in her class worried about being sent home, Eileen commented that she thought the community would be happy to have her. In that she was prophetic!

One of the special opportunities Eileen enjoyed during her time of postulancy and novitiate was learning to play the piano and the organ. She loved music, and this skill enabled her to be organist and choir director in a number of parishes in which she would later serve.

Eileen received a bachelor of science degree in education from the University of Dayton and a master's in education from Xavier University in Cincinnati. For 20 years she taught and/or served as principal in elementary schools in Ohio, Indiana and Virginia. Those years were followed by 18 years teaching English and drama in high schools and, on occasion, serving as head of the English

department.

Teaching was one of her great loves and of those years she wrote, "As a teacher I was always considered to be quite strict and demanding of my students, but I always managed to intersperse and sprinkle some humor and fun as a good balance."

It is noteworthy that during the four years that Eileen taught in Russia's public school she also cared for her invalid mother. That was a time of grace for both of them.

Eileen loved to travel and she organized four tours to Europe for high school and college students. Later, when she worked with the elderly, she led tours to Hawaii and other places in the continental United States as well as to Canada. One of the participants had this to say about Eileen: "This lovely lady with a beautiful smile is charming, witty, and has a bubbly personality. She keeps us entertained and in stitches during the whole trip... She is always such a joy to be with."

When Eileen left teaching, she found a new ministry, that of ministering with the elderly as an outreach worker and on a one-to-one basis in homes. For seven years she managed Hubble Court, a former Cincinnati convent renovated as a shared living home for the elderly. Her organizational skills and deep love for the residents truly made it a "home."

In 1992 Eileen decided to "retire" but she volunteered as receptionist and clerical assistant with various organizations serving the elderly and/or veterans in Cincinnati. From 1996-2000 Eileen was my "right hand" doing the bookkeeping and financial management for Sarah Center in the Over-the-Rhine section of Cincinnati. Her special addi-

tion to the programs there was establishing a weekly bingo. Those of us who knew Eileen well know that bingo was her first choice of entertainment. In fact her last game, which she attended with her friend Carolyn Doll, was on April 15, just two weeks before her death.

Health problems led to Eileen's decision to come home to Salem Heights, where she resided from 2000 to November 2006. Then, due to deteriorating health, she determined that moving to Emma Hall was the best course of action. We all know that once Eileen "determined" something, it happened.

She was deeply appreciative of the care she received at Emma Hall and her last wish at the hospital was to go "home." In hindsight, I believe all of us suspect that home had two meanings for her: Emma Hall with the sisters, and home to God.

What words capture Eileen's spirit? These come to mind: happy, enthusiastic, energetic, creative, people oriented, poetic. One important characteristic must be added: prayerful. If Eileen said she was praying for you, you knew it was more than just a general intention she made. You were mentioned by name and included in one of the many rosaries she prayed each day. How appropriate that she died on April 30 so that she could celebrate May 1 with St. Joseph on his feast day and begin Mary's month in heaven.

Today we thank God for this spirited woman who loved, served, prayed and laughed among us. And Eileen, we ask that you continue to intercede for us so that, like you, we too will hear God's words at the end of our lives, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

—Sister Jeanette Buehler