

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. M. Leonides Piekenbrock

BORN: February 1918

ENTERED CONGREGATION: August 13, 1939

DIED: October 19, 2010

**W**E ... celebrate today the life of Sister Mary Leonides who, for 71 years, led a life of prayerful and joyous service among us.

We welcome her brother Werner, family members and friends who share this celebration with us.

Agnes Cecilia was born in St. Rose, Ohio, to Frank and Catherine (Luttmer) Piekenbrock in February 1918, the third youngest of eight children. She described her life on the family farm as a very happy time with loving and supportive parents who nurtured her to be the caring, responsible person she would be throughout her life.

Although she lived just a few miles from the Maria Stein convent, it was while working at Brunnerdale Seminary that she had her first personal contact with the Sisters of the Precious Blood. She entered the congregation on August 13, 1939, at the age of 20.

In 1942, the year of her first profession, World War II had begun. Teachers were desperately needed and, although she had no formal preparation, she was sent to Phoenix, Arizona, to teach second grade. A week of "indoctrination" by seasoned teachers plus her own good will and God's help got her through. In addition to Phoenix, Sister Leonides also taught in Cloverdale, Ohio, St. Joseph, Mo., and Rensselaer, Ind. Difficulty with asthma contributed to her desire to engage in domestic work. After nine years in teaching, her request to enter into this ministry was granted. She became, in the fullest sense of the word, an "executive housekeeper," keeping herself professionally updated as well

as those who worked with her. She received certification from the Chicago School of Interior Design, the Indiana Association of Homes for the Aged and the National Executive Housekeepers Association. She even persevered through a Dale Carnegie public speaking class of 36 men and four women, earning the award for having made the greatest improvement!

For 38 years Sister Leonides served at: St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, Colo.; Kneipp Springs in Rome City, Ind.; Marian Hall in Flint, Mich.; and the Maria-Joseph Center and Salem Heights in Dayton, Ohio. She was known to be kind, well organized, practical and very good at giving directions.

She appreciated and respected her staff, often working side by side with them and, frequently, taking on the hardest part of the job herself. She was no armchair supervisor! If a task was considered too hard, she was heard to say, "Just do your best; the angels can't do any better." In an article written at the time of her golden jubilee, a friend wrote how impressed she was by so many of Sister Leonides's qualities. Among those listed were her "even temperament and sense of humor, her ability to see the best in everyone, her creativity, her perseverance, her attitude toward life, her wisdom and logic, her ability to adjust to very trying situations, her patience in enabling the handicapped, and her ability to be a peacemaker."

It was not all work for Sister Leonides. With her roots in country life she enjoyed nature and gardening. She became adept in quilting and kept pictures of about 40 quilts she made, most of which

were donated to the Red Cross or to anyone who showed a particular interest in them. Someone once said that she "could make things out of nothing." She also delighted in travel, reading, music, art and drama.

Sister Leonides retired at Salem Heights in 1989 and transferred to Emma Hall at the Maria-Joseph Living Care Center in 2006. Ultimately, Alzheimer's claimed her memory but we are certain that her heart never wavered in her love for the Lord she served so faithfully.

I would like to conclude these memories of Sister Leonides with a personal *Magnificat* she wrote in 1988. I believe this reveals much about the person she was and the attitude with which she lived her life.

*My soul proclaims the Lord my God;  
my spirit sings His praise.  
He looks at me, He shares my life;  
and gladness fills my days.  
He deems it good to serve one's neighbor;  
whatever the needs or chores.  
In teaching, sewing, directing, scrubbing,  
I magnify the Lord.  
For seven and thirty active years domestics have  
filled my days,  
Mingled with hymns of petition and love,  
My Lord I duly praise.  
He fills the hungry with good things,  
for greatness is also for them.  
A promise He made to Abraham,  
My gift is a diadem.  
Praise God my soul; Praise God, Praise God,  
My soul praise God. Amen.*

Let us... whole-heartedly praise God for the gift of Sister Leonides.

—Sister Jeanette Buehler