

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Mary Consuella Salmon

BORN: August 1910

ENTERED CONGREGATION: May 14, 1931

DIED: November 3, 2010

TODAY we celebrate the funeral liturgy for Sister Mary Consuella, known to many of us as Connie. Sister Consuella quietly and peacefully was enveloped into God's presence Wednesday morning, November 3, 2010.

It was just a few months ago that we gathered to celebrate her 100 years of life, a blessing for all of us. Welcome again to Salem Heights, especially her nieces and nephews, relatives, friends and former students, as we say our farewell and leave her in the arms of our loving God. One of those former students, Precious Blood Father Tony Fortman, is with us today as presider for Sister Consuella's funeral Mass.

Sister Consuella began her earthly pilgrimage on the Juhelmar Ranch in Edgewater, near Denver, Colo., in August 1910, with her loving parents John Joseph and Helen Agnes (Passino) Salmon. She was the second of eight children, receiving her mother's name, Helen Agnes. She proudly acknowledged her French-Canadian and Irish ancestry. During Sister Consuella's childhood the family moved to a small farm near Fort Wayne, Ind., from where the Salmon family walked the three miles to attend Precious Blood School.

It was at Precious Blood School that young Helen met the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Sister Eugenia Knapke made a deep and lasting impression on her life. Later in her senior year, while attending St. Catherine's Academy, the spark of a call to religious life was ignited. Her mother encouraged it by often asking, "Wouldn't you like to be a sister?" Just as we have experienced, others probably saw in Sister Consuella a compassionate, prayerful, loving person.

After high school, Helen worked as a secretary for three years, helping the family. In 1931 she responded to her call to religious life, entering the Sisters of the Precious Blood.

After the novitiate she was asked to be a teacher, a ministry that she says she never would have chosen for herself. Sister Consuella enjoyed teaching and noted that the 45 years of being an elementary teacher were very fulfilling and gratifying. She taught in the Ohio public schools of Minster, Glandorf, Botkins, New Riegel, Maria Stein and Fort Recovery; as well as at Catholic schools at Immaculate Conception in Celina, Assumption in Dayton and St. Anthony in Columbus Grove. She also taught at Queen of Peace, Mesa, Ariz.; and in St. Joseph, Mo., at St. Francis and St. Mary's.

Her students remember her as a very loving person who not only taught them the basics but also a love of singing and a way of living. At many of her places of ministry, Sister Consuella was often the organist for the parish.

Shortly after I came to Dayton in 2007, she asked to see me so that I would know her better in case that I would give her eulogy some day. At that time she shared with me her philosophy of life, her deep yearnings, her autobiography, those for whom she prayed, and that she prayed that she would not be afraid to die.

Sister Consuella was so appreciative and grateful to the congregation for the different educational and enrichment experiences in which she had the opportunity to be engaged. After retiring in 1980, one of the notable experiences in her life was a 30-day renewal time in Maggie Valley, N.C., during which she wrote her "Magnificat" that we heard

last evening. [See the Summer 2010 issue of *Sharing & Caring*, page 19 for the text.] At that time she lived in Ottawa, Ohio, helping in the school library and being secretary to Sister Angeline Hoffman, the congregation's Northern Region Director. In 1990, Sister Consuella moved to Salem Heights, volunteering in whatever way she was able or asked, including the use of her secretarial skills of typing, and pastoral visiting at the Maria-Joseph Living Care Center. She also enjoyed the ministry of letter writing.

Besides the various duties Sister Consuella undertook she was very grateful for the extra time that she had for personal prayer and for the opportunities for Mass and community prayer. Prayer was a strong commitment for Sister Consuella. When she said that she would pray for you, you knew that she would. In her special prayer book she had her favorite prayers — along with the names and intentions of those who asked for prayer, as well as the names of her nearly 1,700 students.

We are grateful for the witness of Sister Consuella, that in her compassionate, loving way she took interest in each of us and united with us in prayer.

Sister Consuella, thank you for your almost 80 years as a Sister of the Precious Blood which you cherished as a special gift from God and from which your life-giving ministry flowed. Thank you for being beloved, precious in God's eyes! And thank you for your continual intercession for us before the Lamb of God!

We will miss you, Consuella, as you continue singing your eternal Magnificat!

—Sister Marita Beumer