

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. Madonna Schneider

(Sister Mary Leola)

BORN: May 1916

ENTERED CONGREGATION: July 1, 1932

DIED: October 31, 2010

**W**e celebrate today the Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Madonna Schneider — known as Sister Mary Leola in the early years of her religious life. Madonna was released from her failing health and went quietly to her eternal reward on Sunday evening, Oct. 31, in her 79th year as a Sister of the Precious Blood. Most of us imagine her dancing right into the arms of our loving God with “dem golden slippers.” [Sister Madonna enjoyed the popular song of that title, and danced to it – including at her 75th jubilee celebration in 2007 with golden bows on her shoes!]

Madonna was born in Wapakoneta, Ohio, the youngest child of Gustavo and Catherine (Hemmert) Schneider, in May 1916. She was preceded in death by her brothers and sisters — Leroy, Hilda, Norma and Fred — as well as all her classmates in the congregation. When Madonna was a sophomore in high school she decided to enter the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Sister Madonna says that she was attracted to the congregation because of her great love of the Eucharist and our tradition of adoration. For her, that was the way

to live out her motto in life, “To those who love God, all things work together unto good.”

In response to God’s love, she served as a teacher in primary grades for 40 years. Her first teaching assignment of seven years was in the Precious Blood Day School. Following this she taught in the Ohio public schools of Botkins, Burkettsville, Coldwater, Fort Recovery, Russia and Minister. She ended her teaching ministry at St. Joseph’s School in Wapakoneta, her home parish. She was dearly loved and respected by her students, parents and administrators as she carried her wit and humor to all. Sister Madonna was noted for sharing humorous anecdotes with us about her life in the classroom.

One of Sister Madonna’s characteristics as a teacher was the manner in which she instilled a love of music and dance in her students besides a love of learning the basics. As a partner teacher with her, I knew of this great quality and the quality of the children’s productions. While she was in Minister she wrote the text, lyrics and music of an operetta for young voices, “Dreamland,” for which she received a copyright in August 1967.

The next years were spent in various home art ministries of sewing, food service and housekeeping at Corpus Christi Parish in Dayton, Maria Stein Retreat House, Regina High School near Cincinnati and at Salem Heights. In 1988 she moved to Salem Heights, working in St. Elizabeth’s Sewing Room. In 1991 she began ministry in the Pastoral Care Department of Maria-Joseph Center, for which she received certificates of service for five consecutive years.

In 2004 Sister Madonna moved to Emma Hall, taking with her her humor, her golden slippers and love of singing — but most of all, her desire to pray and spend more time in Eucharistic adoration. Those of us who visited with her during these last years are witnesses to her humor and wit, even though at times she could not hear us plainly, asking us to repeat. Madonna leaves us a legacy of being a masterful primary teacher and a beloved companion who was ready to sing or dance at any time.

We thank you, Madonna, as you dance in eternal adoration. May you rest in peace.

—Sister Marita Beumer