

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. Hedwig Mary (Leocadia) Stammen

BORN: August 1920

ENTERED CONGREGATION: August 15, 1940

DIED: February 4, 2013

“I take one day at a time and do my best for the Lord,” said Sister Hedwig Mary Stammen on the occasion of her 50th Anniversary as a Sister of the Precious Blood. And this doing her best has touched the lives of many over her years as cook, baker, caregiver and sister to her brother and sisters of the Stammen Family as well as to her Precious Blood Family.

Hedwig Mary was born to Adolph and Kunigunde (Klingshirn) Stammen in August 1920 in Sharpsburg, Ohio. “We always called Mom, ‘Cune’” said Heddy who was the oldest of seven children and who generously helped her mother in the care of her brother and sisters who lived life on the farm.

When Hedwig was in the sixth grade the Stammen Family moved to Fort Recovery. The Sisters of the Precious Blood taught in the Fort’s Catholic parish, Mary Help of Christians, and Heddy was immediately impressed by the title of the sisters’ Congregation, but even more so by their prayerful spirit and the prayers they taught.

Desiring to give herself entirely to God, she entered the Salem Heights convent in 1940 to begin first the postulancy and then the novitiate in preparation for becoming a Sister of the Precious Blood. During the postulancy Hedwig learned sewing, embroidery and craft stitching. When invested as a novice she received the name, Sister Mary Leocadia. Her novice director, Sister Nathalia

Smith, was an inspiration and a teacher who instilled basic spiritual concepts and practices and also made sure the novices learned home art skills. As a senior novice Sister learned and practiced food service techniques and began developing into an excellent cook at which she ministered for forty-six years.

After her profession of vows on August 15, 1943, Sister Leocadia served in food service in Ohio at Brunnerdale, St. Charles and St. Gregory Seminaries in Canton, Carthagena and Cincinnati. She and her CPPS Sisters worked long dedicated hours baking & preparing delicious and nourishing meals for the priests and seminarians — doing this in the footsteps of Mother Brunner who served her priest son and the seminarians at Loewenburg Castle in Switzerland.

In addition to ministering at seminaries, Sister provided excellent meals for her Sisters in Ohio convents in Marywood, Cleveland, Maria Stein, Cincinnati, and Dayton. This terrific cook also served in the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the Maria Joseph Home in Dayton and Kneipp Springs in Rome City, Indiana.

Sister Hedwig enjoyed chit-chatting with the various pilgrims at the Shrine of the Holy Relics as well as with the many delightful guests and folks she met in her many places of ministry. She gained many friends who delighted in keeping up friendship with this woman who genuinely listened to and shared with them. An unseen ministry of Hedwig involved the phone. She spent time each week calling elderly women and just listening to their

stories of joy and sorrows.

After ministering almost a half-century in food service, Sister Hedwig, who years before returned to using her baptismal name, felt called to live with and help elderly women in their own homes. For a period of ten years she companioned Loretta Ferricks in Minister and Henrietta Hoelscher in Fort Loramie. All along she continued her religious life practices, especially daily Mass, and brought Holy Communion to her elderly ladies and prayed the rosary and other Precious Blood prayers with them.

When her companion Henrietta died, Hedwig retired in 1997 to Salem Heights where she enjoyed added time for prayer and lived in lovely surroundings with her Sisters. She appreciated walks in God’s beautiful nature, visited the sick in Emma Hall, and played cards with many. In addition she found time to crochet, do fancy work, and occasionally make pies and special cookies for her Sister companions.

A friend wrote that Sister had a deep love for community, sharing her practical insights quite generously at cluster meetings and community gatherings. Hedwig said, “I thank the Lord daily for being a Sister of the Precious Blood.” Sister always worked hard in her apostolate. She indeed has fed the hungry with love and compassion. We shall miss you, dear Sister Hedwig, and are happy to have called you our sister and friend in this Family of the Precious Blood.

— Sister Nancy Kinross