

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Mary Iona Taylor

BORN: December 1913

ENTERED CONGREGATION: February 2, 1929

DIED: January 16, 2011

WE welcome each of you today to this Eucharistic liturgy in celebration of the life of Sister Iona Taylor.

In the very small town of Peoples, Ky., Geraldine Marie was born in December 1913, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, to her loving and devoted parents, Rose Moeller and William Roscoe Taylor. Geraldine had two younger sisters, Julie and Mary Elizabeth, who both preceded her in death.

At the age of five Geraldine and her family moved to a farm in Greenville, Ohio, where tobacco was a main crop. To solve a problem with tobacco worms, Geraldine and her sister Julie received a nickel for every tobacco worm they pulled off the leaves. Just two years later the family moved to a farm south of Greenville, and the next year to Dayton.

Life in the Taylor house was gravely interrupted when Geraldine's mother died at the early age of 37; Geraldine was just 11 years old. At this time the girls were welcomed at St. Joseph's orphanage by Sister Regis Kirschner. Their dad visited them often. However, shortly after Geraldine's graduation from eighth grade, her father also died.

After attending Julianne High School in Dayton for one year, Geraldine entered the aspirancy of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. On Feb. 2, 1929, she officially entered the community, made first vows on Aug. 15, 1931, and received the name Sister Mary Iona.

She completed high school by the end of her novitiate. Sister Iona earned a bachelor's of science in education degree from the Athenaeum of Ohio

in 1943, and a master's degree from Xavier University in Cincinnati in 1952. In 1970 she received a scholarship to Indiana University where she obtained an Educational Doctorate in Language Arts with a concentration in reading. In addition to these degrees, Sister Iona attended numerous workshops and seminars related to reading. These experiences found her traveling across the United States and as far as England, Switzerland, and Austria.

Sister Iona spent nearly 60 years in education as a teacher, principal, reading specialist and consultant, ministering in Ohio, Missouri, Colorado, California, Indiana, Michigan and Louisiana. Her special love was reading. One of Sister Iona's favorite ways of bringing life to her reading classes was having the students give puppet shows of stories they wrote or read.

She believed that every child could learn to read and found a program called "Workshop Way" that could help her accomplish this. She herself used this method and gave workshops in Florida, North Carolina, New York, Oklahoma, Alaska and Alabama helping others implement the program's techniques.

In addition to teaching, Sister Iona wrote and published a small book about the Blessed Virgin Mary with a companion coloring book for young children. *Highlights* magazine published her story, "The Mailman's Whistle." She also wrote *A Language Arts Guide* for grades one through eight that was published by the Detroit Catholic School Office.

In her mid-70s, Sister Iona took a less hectic approach to ministry by serving in parishes and companioning the elderly. She then moved to St. Charles Seminary in Carthagen, where she

spent nine years in semi-retirement. At the age of 89 she became fully retired at Salem Heights. After a serious illness in March 2008 Sister Iona needed full nursing care and moved to Emma Hall, [the health care facility for Sisters of the Precious Blood at the Maria-Joseph Living Care Center.]

Sister Iona spent quality time in prayer. Our Blessed Mother was always on call. Praying a rosary for someone's intention was her way of showing appreciation. In retirement she prayed an hour of adoration in the morning and afternoon each day in addition to participating daily in the Eucharistic liturgy. One of her greatest prayer intentions was for our community to choose a common apparel of identification, and I am sure she will continue this pursuit in heaven. Her greatest consolation from prayer was receiving a split-second vision of her sister, Julie, radiating happiness. Sister Iona had prayed for Julie and she regarded this little vision as God's way of saying Julie is in heaven.

Sister Iona slipped away from us in her own very private way on Jan. 16, 2011, having completed 97 years of life and 82 years of faithful discipleship as a Sister of the Precious Blood. For the past few months she had been verbalizing that she was ready to go to heaven and she was pretty sure God was almost ready to have her come home.

So we are here Iona, at your funeral, which you defined as "...calling on angels and saints to conduct the departed into heaven." May the saints and angels lead you into the loving embrace of God where you can experience happiness beyond all your expectations.

—Sister Madonna Ratermann