

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Eileen Tomlinson

(Sister M. Cephas)

BORN: March 1917

ENTERED CONGREGATION: January 31, 1937

DIED: May 10, 2010

We gather ... to sing to the Lord a joyful song in memory of our beloved Sister Eileen Tomlinson...

Eileen was born in March 1917, to Sheldon and Antoinette (Welage) Tomlinson in Cincinnati. Eileen had a brother, Robert, and a half-brother, George Dressman, both of whom preceded her in death. Her father was an artist and craftsman who died when she was just ten years old.

Eileen attended Regina High School in Cincinnati and there came to know the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Upon graduation she studied at the YMCA Business College while caring for her mother, who had cancer. Within two months of her mother's death, Eileen entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood on Jan. 31, 1937.

Eileen's artistic talent was recognized early on. She received her education degree from the University of Dayton and her master's in art from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. In 1944 she became art professor at the Athenaeum in Cincinnati. During her nine years there she also taught at Regina High School, after which she became "artist in residence" at Salem Heights. Here she taught art to the postulants and novices and also designed vestments for the Ecclesiastical Art Department. Designing vestments was one of the highlights of her nearly 16 years at the motherhouse.

In 1968 Eileen journeyed to San Luis Rey, Calif., where she taught art at San Luis Rey Academy until the school closed in 1977. The academy became

the San Luis Rey Parish Center and Eileen's art studio, the Loretto House, became the place where adults of the area were taught calligraphy, water color painting and ceramics. During this time she also became a Eucharistic minister, joined the choir, worked on the liturgical committee and continued to make vestments and banners.

Sister Eileen retired to Salem Heights in 1997. The term "retired" is used loosely in the sense that, while she had more time to read, pray, reflect and sing in the choir, she continued to share her artistic talents in so many ways: jubilee and special occasion cards, program cover designs, Mother Brunner statuettes, wood carvings and so much more. She was readily available to anyone who needed her.

It would be easy to dwell on the tremendous works of art that Eileen left to us, to churches, institutions, friends, and so on. This very building houses some of her most cherished pieces. We must also not forget her writings on the liturgy and Precious Blood spirituality. Our CPPS Dialog carried her reflections on the liturgical changes following Vatican II and moved us, as a congregation, to a deeper understanding and appreciation of those changes. The many symbols she designed for Sunday liturgies were always carefully researched, thus deepening her insights into Precious Blood spirituality and becoming sources of written reflections.

Her trip to the Loewenberg Castle area of Switzerland began a series of writings on Mother Brunner. The last one, "A Dream Come True," was her personal tribute to Mother Brunner. Lest we forget, it was Sister Eileen who designed

and restored the Shrine to Mother Brunner so many of us remember dating to the late '50s. The rosary also played a role in Eileen's spiritual life. In 2007 she did a final booklet of Rosary Meditations based upon the Mysteries of Light.

As many of us shared memories of Eileen these past few days, we described her as a gentle woman, gifted, centered, caring, prayerful, unassuming, available. Eileen was a contemplative, a mystic, one whose life was lived with a deep awareness of God's presence and love — a love which flowed outward through the works of her hands. What we saw was the fruit of her prayer, the depth of her Precious Blood spirituality, her love of the Eucharist and her devotion to Mother Brunner. The works of her hands will remain long after she is gone and will be a source of inspiration for many. It is the woman behind the works who will remain in our hearts.

At the time of her 60th jubilee, Eileen wrote: "The congregation has been my life. Chosen by the Lord and endowed with talents, I try to live our Precious Blood spirituality happily and joyfully, with an ever increasing awareness day by day." That awareness reached its fullness on Monday evening, May 10, when Eileen entered the gates of heaven and was greeted by the Lord she served so well and by Mother Brunner, to whom she was so devoted.

It is with a spirit of gratitude that we join in this liturgy today which was planned by Sr. Eileen. Let us celebrate joyfully all that God has done in and through her.

—Sr. Jeanette Buehler, CPPS