

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. Clara Marie Tumbush

(Sister M. Ildephonse)

BORN: December 1919

ENTERED CONGREGATION: August 3, 1941

DIED: June 20, 2010

**W**e gather today to celebrate the life of Sister Clara Marie Tumbush. We welcome her nieces and nephews who are here to celebrate her life with us.

In December 1919, Henry and Frances (Wiemers) Tumbush welcomed their youngest and eleventh child, Clara Marie, on their small farm in Philothea, Ohio. Clara had nine brothers and one sister who was in the middle of all her brothers. All of them have preceded her in death. Since Clara was the youngest, and with so many brothers, they loved to tease her, but their mother would come to her rescue. However, as Clara grew older they became very protective of her. She attended a one-room school in Philothea, and then went on to high school at St. Henry, Ohio, for two years.

Her initial acquaintance with sisters was through the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor who would come around to country homes begging for food. From her sister-in-law, Clara found out about the three Timmerman girls who were Sisters of the Precious Blood. However, after leaving high school Clara felt that she should help her mother, who was up in years, so she postponed her desire to go to the convent and worked at the Buckeye Clothing Company in Coldwater, Ohio. At the age of 21 she ap-

plied for admission to the Sisters of the Precious Blood and entered on August 3, 1941. Upon entering the novitiate she received the name of Sister Mary Ildephonse.

Her first assignment was to the infirmary at Salem Heights. This was followed by 15 years of domestic work in seminaries and episcopal residences. When Lourdes Hall was built for infirm Sisters of the Precious Blood, Sister Clara Marie was sent to St. Francis Hospital in Cincinnati where she became a licensed practical nurse. After graduating from nursing school in 1960 she ministered as a nurse for 20 years at Lourdes Hall. Subsequently she did nursing at Rome City, Indiana, and Emma Hall in the Maria-Joseph Living Care Center.

In 1977 Sister Clara Marie became sacristan at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral in Cincinnati, serving in that position for eight years. It was actually the possibility of becoming a sacristan that initially attracted her to religious life. She had learned that Sister Emelita Timmerman was a sacristan and Clara thought that was something she would like to do. Many years later God fulfilled her youthful dream. She ended her years of active ministry as a nurse's aide at St. Charles Center in Carthagena, Ohio.

In 1990 Clara Marie retired to Salem Heights, where she was a "special

angel" as one of the sisters who lived there described her. What made her a special angel was her attentiveness to any need that might arise, especially when someone was sick or needed to go to a doctor. She also substituted as sacristan. Besides doing whatever might be needed, what made her even more special was her loving care and concern. Clara Marie was a quiet, gentle person with a warm smile, dedicated and compassionate. Retirement offered her added time for prayer as well as time to read and keep up on current events, which had been hobbies throughout her life.

In 2002, due to failing health, she moved to Emma Hall in the Maria Joseph Living Care Center. There she had a plaque on her wall which read: "Growing old is not for sissies." She certainly was not a sissy as she walked the path of suffering and weakness. Throughout her time in Emma Hall she continued to share her gentle smile and compassion even as her own suffering increased, particularly in the past year and a half.

On Sunday, June 20, Clara finished her journey here on earth and walked into the loving, compassionate embrace of the God she had served so well for 68 years as a Sister of the Precious Blood.

— Sister Edna Hess