

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. Canice Werner

BORN: September 1916

ENTERED CONGREGATION: JANUARY 21, 1932

DIED: April 22, 2013

**S**ister Canice Werner was born Frances Elizabeth Werner in Oldenburg, Indiana, in September 1916, the oldest of the four children of Bernard and Isabel Nunlist

Werner. Her sister, Helen, died in March 1921 at 11 months of age; her brother Bernard died in 2003. We are happy to welcome her beloved sister Marie here today along with many devoted nieces and nephews, other family members and friends.

Sister Canice's father died in 1921. In order for the family to stay together, the family moved to St. Joseph Orphanage in Dayton in 1925 where Canice completed her grade school years. She came to the Sisters of the Precious Blood after the eighth grade, entered the Congregation in 1932 and made first profession in 1934. After two years of study at the Athenaeum of Cincinnati, she began a long and remarkable ministry as an educator — as a teacher in Celina and Ottawa, Ohio where she also assumed responsibility for the elementary school; then off to Millville for five years as principal and teacher of a new two room school in rural Ohio, where in her own words "life was at its best." In 1953, again in her own words "she was shocked back into reality" when she was assigned as Principal at Our Lady of Good Counsel, a 17 room, 1200 + student school in Cleveland, Ohio. During her ten years in Cleveland she became renowned as a creative and innovative educator within the Diocese and beyond. In 1963 she was asked to share her expertise with the Congregation in the community's Education office for three years. This was followed by three memorable years as Principal of Incarnation School in Centerville. She ventured into the public arena in the Research and Development Department of the Dayton Public Schools. In this position she traveled to the various Dayton Public Schools evaluating new state funded teaching-learning programs. Her gifts in the field of education were also shared as a part time instructor at the University of Dayton and as a project coordinator in the Diocese of Saginaw. However, I think it is fair to say that she never stopped using her multi-faceted gifts as an educator. In the 60's she coordinated the Precious Blood Christian Formation Program developing ma-

terials for the Good News of Salvation — Gospel Discussions for the Sunday readings — and formation materials for high school students and adults on Precious Blood Spirituality.

In 1972 Sister was called to leadership and ministry within the Congregation first as a Southern Region Councilor, then as Secretary General and, in 1980, as President of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. It would be impossible to name all her accomplishments during her four short years as President. The guidelines for her administration were: our inspiration — Eucharist/Precious Blood Spirituality — our ministry — Redemptive Service. She challenged her Sisters through a formal process of study and reflection on our Mission Statement and integrating this with our newly written Way of Life documents. Our challenge of ministry through Redemptive Service was expanded through a series of weekend presentations titled "Eucharist Today." During this time the Congregation also held its second Congregation-wide Congress and the 150th anniversary of the founding of our Congregation celebrating 150 years of faith-filled living and giving. During her administration the Congregation also celebrated 25 years of ministry in Chile and at Marian Hall in Flint, Michigan. Canice was one of three leaders of Communities of Precious Blood women who dreamed about and brought to fruition the Precious Blood Leadership Conference of the major superiors of women and men's communities dedicated to the Precious Blood. This conference continues to be a vital source of unity and collaboration among the CPPS O'Fallon community, the Adorers of the Blood of Christ and the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

One would think that after her service as President and at age 68, Canice would be ready to sit back and relax. Not Canice. She was just getting started on the next phase of her journey. Canice served for 11 years as CPPS Mission Coordinator and, during that time, as interim administrator of Marian Hall, a senior residence in Flint, Michigan. She frequented the archives researching Congregational history, providing, among other things, the material for *More than the Doing*, a history of the congregation from 1936 to 1966. She

was always willing and eager to share the fruits of her research.

Canice never stopped deepening her understanding and integration of the Precious Blood Spirituality. She shared her knowledge, experience and love for the Precious Blood and the Eucharist in innumerable ways through retreats, lectures, homilies and writings. She was ever ready to engage in dialogue about the Precious Blood. The last presentation I found in her records was a reflection given in 2008.

Urged by the redeeming love of the Eucharistic Christ, Canice was very active in peace and justice efforts. She participated in the Interfaith Action for a Violence Free America whose ministry continues today as prayer vigils at homicide sites throughout the city. She was a member of the Archdiocesan Social Action and World Peace Commission, the Interfaith Ministers for Reconciliation and the Greater Dayton Christian Connection.

These facts about the life of Sister Canice only scratch the surface of her involvements. The litany goes on and on. (Be sure to see the history boards that will be on display near the dining room.)

Canice was, first and foremost, deeply in love with the Jesus who loved her enough to shed His Precious Blood for her. This truth became her life force. She was a devoted daughter of Mother Brunner, a committed Sister of the Precious Blood striving to live its charism in every aspect of her life. She was a holy woman, mentor and friend. She was loved by us, her Sisters, who were and will continue to be inspired and challenged by her legacy. She was a bundle of energy, always searching, always sharing, passionate in all she did. She deeply touched those with whom she came in contact, each in their own special way. WHO Sister was lives on in the memories and hearts of each of us. Continue to share these memories; keep alive her spirit.

Canice, we love you, we thank you. We rejoice with you as you relax now in the Divine embrace. Keep praying for us.

— Sister Florence Seifert, CPPS