

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Kathryn Webster

(Sister Mary Arnoldine)

BORN: July 1920

ENTERED CONGREGATION: June 27, 1935

DIED: August 26, 2007

WE welcome you to the celebration of Sister Kathryn Webster's entrance into eternal life. Some of us remember her as Sister Arnoldine.

On July 1920, 87 years ago, Kathryn was welcomed into the Phoenix, Ariz., home of Arthur and Minnie (White) Webster. She was the middle child of five girls, two older sisters, Mary Ellen and Honora, and two younger sisters Barbara and Frances. An early tragedy visited the family when Honora, at the age of five, died in a car-related accident, leaving the family greatly saddened.

All the girls attended St. Mary's Elementary School in Phoenix, approximately ten miles from their home. Mary Ellen and Kathryn were boarders at St. Mary's School with the Sisters of the Precious Blood until Mary Ellen could drive; then they made the trip each day by car. In addition to school, Kathryn had chores to do on their dairy farm. Milking cows before and after school was not her favorite task. Her cherished memories are those of spending long evenings listening to her Dad read classics like *Treasure Island* and singing from *The Golden Book of Songs* as Mary Ellen played the piano. Games of pretend occupied much of Kathryn's free time.

While in sixth grade, Kathryn wrote a short essay called "MY IDEAL!" It reads:

"When I graduate I intend to go away to be a nun. Ever since I was very young my

one desire was to become a Sister of the Precious Blood. Their habit, their work, but most of all the spirit in which they do their work appealed to me. The reason of my wanting to become a Sister is to work for Our Lord who died to save me."

Her teachers...must have greatly impressed this young student.

Originally Kathryn intended to enter the convent after high school. However, after she reached the eighth grade Kathryn tells us, "It seemed to me that Jesus was calling me." Her parents had some reluctance but did not stand in her way. So on June 24, 1935, at the age of 14 Kathryn made a long four-day trip from Arizona to Dayton, Ohio, to join the Sisters of the Precious Blood.

Kathryn graduated from Precious Blood High School in June of 1938 and made her first profession of vows in August of that same year. She received a Bachelor of Science in Education Degree from the Athenaeum of Ohio in 1950. Sister Kathryn did not pursue a higher degree but certainly enriched herself by taking courses at The Catholic University of America, Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, University of Dayton, Phoenix College and Arizona State University.

Kathryn's ministry started quite quickly. Due to a sister's illness, she was sent to teach first grade at Holy Name Parish in Dayton immediately after her first profession. The next two years were spent at college obtaining her teaching certificate. Sister Kathryn then continued her ministry of teaching which took her to the states of Ohio,

Indiana, Virginia and Arizona.

Kathryn's teaching gifts came alive in the primary classroom and she was always willing to implement new ideas that would enhance the learning of her students. Individualized learning and the open classroom were among her greatest successes.

After almost 30 years of teaching small children, Sister Kathryn broadened her horizons by teaching remedial reading to adults in Phoenix and at an Arizona Apache Indian reservation. Later, Kathryn returned to Phoenix and became a secretary at the Maricopa County Hospital. She then served as librarian at the Phoenix Public Library for 10 years.

After retiring, Sister Kathryn became involved in volunteer work at her parish. Her special love was being a part of the perpetual adoration program.

Feeling the effects of mounting years, Kathryn decided it was time to return to Salem — the same trip she had taken many years earlier. In her autobiography Sister Kathryn writes:

"When you become a sister you know you have given your life to God and your strongest goal is to grow closer and closer to Him. I guess I was about average in this."

Kathryn, I believe you were much more than average. God has that upper room prepared for you. Enjoy great peace praising God!

—Sister Madonna Ratermann