

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. Mary Dolorosa Oen

BORN: December 1912

ENTERED CONGREGATION: September 8, 1936

DIED: February 19, 2017

**T**oday we gather to celebrate the life of our dear Sister Mary Dolorosa Oen. Her 80 years of faithful and dedicated service as a Sister of the Precious Blood is truly a blessing for her family and our Precious Blood community.

Monica Stella Oen was born on December 25, 1912 to Frank Joseph Oen and Wilhelmina Fisher in Hume, Ohio. She was baptized on January 5, 1913 at St. Joseph Church in Wapakoneta, Ohio. Monica Stella learned the gift of community living early as the middle child among her five brothers and five sisters. Her sisters Mary Oen and Kathryn Dorsten are here to celebrate with us today. Monica came from a family of religious. She had a sister and two cousins who were Precious Blood Sisters, an aunt who was a Sister of Charity and three nephews who are presently Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Monica came from a happy and close family who enjoyed and helped each other. I remember when Sister Dolorosa told me the story of how she and her siblings took the horse and buggy to school. They only had work horses, so it took them one hour to get from home to school. She said that her father put hot bricks on the floor of the buggy to keep their feet warm from second to the tenth grade, until which time she needed to stay at home to help her mother take care of the children.

Monica always had a special devotion to the Blessed Mother, so on September 8, the birthday of Mary, in 1936 at the age of 24, Monica followed her call to a life of prayer and dedication to the Lord. She entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood and was given the name Sister Mary Dolorosa. When she attended Immaculate Conception School in Botkins, she said "It was the quiet, peaceful,

simple and prayerful life of the Sisters that drew me to the Precious Blood community."

Sister Dolorosa's ministry began by serving as assistant mistress in the aspirancy at Salem Heights. Most of her ministry, however, was in the Domestic Arts field. She followed in Mother Brunner's footsteps by her dedication and care for priests. After serving as the cook at Kneipp Springs, Rome City, Indiana for four years followed by four years at St. Mary's Seminary in Norwood, Ohio, she had the privilege of serving 40 years at the residences of Bishop John Carberry in Lafayette, Indiana; Columbus, Ohio, and St. Louis, Missouri. Over the years, Sister Dolorosa served as housekeeper, cook, laundress, gardener and chauffeur. Sister Dolorosa said a highlight in her life was when Bishop John Carberry invited her to travel to Rome to share in his celebration when he was elevated to Cardinal.

When Sister Dolorosa celebrated her Golden Jubilee in 1986, she invited Cardinal Carberry to Botkins to preside at her Mass and to join with her family, friends and parishioners in the celebration and to mark the first time in history that a Cardinal has visited the Shelby County parish. "Today is your day, dear Sister Dolorosa. I offer this Mass from the bottom of my heart for all your intentions. You have guided me through the course of my life," the Cardinal said in his homily.

In 1989 she transitioned from St. Louis to Salem Heights to continue her life of prayer and retirement. Since Dolorosa was an excellent seamstress, she used those gifts to help mend and alter clothing for the Sisters. In addition, she served as a chauffeur for the Sisters and drove them to many doctors' appointments.

In 1993, Dolorosa wrote "I am retired and plan to spend the rest of my days

here helping others as much as I can. I am happy to be here and appreciate the time I now have for a life of prayer and to keep up the hours of adoration." She considered it a great privilege to pray often before the Blessed Sacrament and to go to Mass each day. She continued to help the Sisters with their sewing and mending and always had a word of appreciation and smile for her Sisters.

On September 14, 2012 Dolorosa took up residence in Emma Hall. The Precious Blood of Jesus was her source of inspiration and courage as she continued to be a life-giving presence through her cheerful smile and words of encouragement to her sisters. In her autobiography on her 75th Jubilee, one of the Sisters stated "Sister Dolorosa is truly a gem among us. Like the stars that shown on the Christmas night of her birth, December 25, 1912, Sister Dolorosa has radiated Christ's light to us through her smile, her life of perpetual prayer and her ever gentle, caring spirit."

Dolorosa said "Being a member of CPPS means very much to me." She said that the high points of her religious life were her Investment, Vow Days and her Silver and Golden Jubilee celebrations. On September 8, this past year we were able to celebrate her 80th anniversary of the day she entered in 1936. Sister Dolorosa was very close to her family. She looked forward to the letters that her sisters, Mary and Katie would write each week. It was only a year ago that it became too difficult for Dolorosa to write her weekly letters.

Sister Dolorosa, we thank God for your many gifts and for dedicating your life to God so faithfully these past eighty years. We will miss your quiet and prayerful presence and ask you to pray for us.

— Sister Cecilia Taphorn