

## IN MEMORIAM



# Sr. Joanela Whaley

(Sister Mary Joanela)

BORN: January 1919

ENTERED CONGREGATION: August 15, 1941

DIED: September 8, 2017

**E**lizabeth Whaley was born in Chicago on January 8, 1919, the only child of Patrick Whaley and Elizabeth Keating. Her mother died three days after her birth. Her father, unable to cope with the tragedy, took Elizabeth from the hospital to the home of her Aunt Nellie and Uncle Julius Mendelson, who became her Mom and Dad. She said they were the best parents anyone could wish for. When Elizabeth was seven years old, her uncle Julius was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Shortly after, her Aunt Nellie, Uncle Julius and Elizabeth moved to Phoenix to be near her biological father, who died only six months later.

After her adopted mom died, Elizabeth felt free to pursue a long-felt dream of becoming a Sister. After meeting the Sisters in Phoenix, she knew she wanted to be a Sister of the Precious Blood. At the age of 22 she entered the Congregation in Dayton, Ohio on August 15, 1941 and was given the religious name of Sister Mary Joanela. On her 60th anniversary of religious life, Sister Joanela said upon entering she felt at home, loved the peace, the quiet and above all the prayer time. It was during her novitiate with Mother Nathalia, then the novice director, that her prayer life was nourished and served as a foundation for the rest of her life. In the novitiate Joanela learned her wonderful culinary skills. Following her profession in 1944, she began a fifty-year ministry in dietary services and activities.

at San Luis Rey Academy, then St. Gregory Seminary and St. Peter in Chains, Cincinnati; and St. Thomas Seminary in Denver. She and Sister Armella were responsible for the dietary service at Fatima Hall, our high school for girls interested in religious life. Joanela stated in her 60th autobiography, "Our lifestyle there was a bit of a divided adventure; we cooked and slept in Fatima Hall but we joined the sisters at Salem Heights for daily Eucharist, prayer and recreation." Joanela worked 13 years serving with the dietary department staff at the Maria Joseph Center and later Salem Heights.

A Sister said, "Joanela always made Sister Visitors and guests feel welcome. She always saw to it that there was more than enough food to eat at every meal she served. An excellent cook, she enjoyed serving a meal that was as pleasant to see as it was to eat. She especially outdid herself for the Sisters on feast days." In 1989 after many years in food service, Joanela transitioned into serving in the Altar Bread Department before retiring at Salem Heights in 1995.

Sister Joanela was a shy, quiet woman but those who knew her best warned, "don't take her for granted!" She was an industrious, hard-working reliable person who got the job done. "Once you have formed a friendship with Sister Joanela, you can count on it to be true blue!" affirms a friend who called her "Jo Jo." In her younger days she enjoyed reading, sewing and listening to music.

and in 2012 due to failing health took up residence at the Maria Joseph Center. There she continued to share community with her Sisters by dining with them and other residents, attending daily Mass and participating in other activities provided.

Sister Joanela had a special devotion to Mary. She was rarely without her rosary, praying it several times a day. In her later years, you could find her either in her room taking a nap or enjoying being with others in the gathering space in Emma Hall. She loved sharing her past memories, especially those made with her adopted sister, June, in Arizona. Her smile was a treasure for those who were her caregivers and for the Sisters who spent time visiting with her. Even though in her later years, Joanela was a woman of few words partly due to hearing loss, she loved to have visitors, even if it meant just sitting together and enjoying each other's company.

I've been reflecting lately on what it must have been like for Joanela to meet her mother whom she never knew. What joy it must have been! What a privilege it was for her to die on the Birthday of Mary and to be buried on September 12, the Holy Name of Mary. Sister Joanela, you are now with the Lord and His Blessed Mother that you loved so much. We will miss your quiet but loving presence and ask you to pray for us.

Joanela served faithfully in food service

Sister lived at Salem heights for 17 years

— **Sister Cecilia Taphorn**