

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Rita Yahl

(Sister Mary Melania)

BORN: November 1922

ENTERED CONGREGATION: August 3, 1941

DIED: July 12, 2018

Today we celebrate the life of Sister Rita Yahl, a dedicated Sister of the Precious Blood for 77 years. Rita was a gifted person who loved life. She loved being with her family, her Sisters and her many friends.

Sister Rita was born in November 1922, to Joseph Emil Yahl and Martha Greve in St. Marys, Ohio. She was the oldest of 12 siblings. She is survived by one sister, Rose, and her three brothers Joe, Gene and Bob. The two younger brothers were born after Rita entered the convent. Her family were members of Holy Rosary Parish and all the children attended Holy Rosary School.

On August 3, 1941, Rita formally entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood. She was given the name Sister Mary Melania as her religious name; however, like so many other Sisters after Vatican II, she returned to her baptismal name.

Rita received a Bachelor of Science in education from the University of Dayton and a master's in education with a major in home economics and a special concentration in vocational home economics from St. Louis University.

Her first 15 years of teaching were in the primary grades in Phoenix, AZ; Linton, ND; and North College Hill, Cincinnati. She then taught six and seventh grade and also served as principal for two years at St. Patrick School in Belle-

fontaine, Ohio.

From 1961 to 1986, Rita found her niche and taught home economics at Marion High School in Maria Stein, Ohio. There she initiated the Junior Retreat League through which students assisted at the Maria Stein Retreat House. Five years later, she started the Marion Future Homemakers program, and the student body was treated to annual style shows. Through her skillful leadership the home economics department had become a state-affiliated vocational program.

Sister Rita's students also received the State Homemakers Award granted by the Future Homemakers of America at the annual state convention. In addition, 17 of her junior and senior students received the state honor in the national Fleischmann's Yeast menu planning contest.

Rita meticulously passed along the many principles and skills of home-making to hands of students, exacting quality work and extending tender, maternal guidance. Some of the girls in the freshman class in home economics made colorful quilts for migrant families of Mercer County. Rita said, "I'm not the easiest person to please. My dedication to perfection never takes a holiday."

In 1986, Rita retired from teaching but continued to live in Mercer County so that she could be close to help out in the Pilgrim Gift Shop at the Shrine. Early on Rita acquired a sewing machine and

delighted many with her beautifully sewn baptismal gowns and doll clothes as well as aprons, stuffed pillows, crib blankets and baby afghans to be sold at the Pilgrim Gift Shop. Rita thoroughly enjoyed sewing, an art learned decades ago from her mother. In 2004, she said, "I'm not a person who can sit and do nothing. I have to keep my hands and mind busy. God made me that way and gave me a creative outlet."

She loved to play pinocle and admitted to being a bit competitive. She also enjoyed fishing and traveling. One of Rita's favorite memories was when she spent a month in the house of prayer at St. Joseph Center in Tiffin.

In Jan. 2005, when Rita was 82, she moved to Salem Heights but continued her sewing ministry until her failing eyesight necessitated that she give up her sewing. At difficult times in her life, Rita's prayer was always, "Your will be done."

In August 2016, when Rita celebrated her 75th jubilee, she received numerous congratulatory and grateful messages on Facebook, many of those from her students who fondly remember her.

Sister Rita, thank you for gracing us with your presence. We have been inspired by your prayerfulness, positive attitude and loving spirit. May you rest in peace!

— Sister Cecilia Taphorn