

SISTER M. PETRONETTE HRBAL, O.S.F. 710

Born: October 12, 1908 in Mala Revuca, Austria-Hungary
Parents: George and Anna (Homola) Hrbal
Postulancy: December 29, 1923
Novitiate: August 12, 1924
First Profession: August 13, 1926
Final Profession: August 12, 1930
Died: Friday, January 8, 1993 at 4:00 p.m. at
Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home



Ministry:

1925 - 1926 St. Ciement, Chicago, IL, Grade 3
1926 - 1930 St. Stephen, Streator, IL, Grades 3,4,5,6
1930 - 1933 St. Joseph, Joliet, IL, Grades 5,6
1933 - Oct. Holy Family, Bayfield, WI, Grades 3,4,5
1933 - 1935 St. Francis Assisi, Chicago, IL, Grade 6
1935 - 1936 Assumption, Chicago, IL, Grades 4,5,6
1936 - 1937 St. Stephen, Johnstown, PA, Grade 6
1937 - 1941 St. Joseph, Joliet, IL, Grades 7,8
1941 - 1942 Sacred Heart-Englewood, Chicago, IL, Grade 7
1942 - 1943 Sts. Peter and Paul, Chicago, IL, Grade 8
1943 - 1948 St. Joseph, Joliet, IL, Grade 8
1948 - 1954 Assumption, Chicago, IL, Superior, Principal, Grades 7,8
1954 - 1955 St. Francis Xavier, Chicago, IL, Grade 8
1955 - 1956 St. Jude, Cleveland, OH, Superior and Principal, Grades 5,6
1956 - 1962 Assumption, Chicago, IL, Superior and Principal, Grades 7,8
1962 - 1967 St. Mary, Fairfield, AL, Superior and Principal, Grades 7,8
1967 - 1968 St. Stephen, Streator, IL, Grade 8
1968 - 1969 Assumption, Chicago, IL, Grade 8
1969 - 1973 Assumption, Chicago, IL, Principal
1973 - 1974 Guardian Angel Home, Joliet, IL, Receptionist/Assistant
1974 - 1977 St. Thomas, Louisville, OH, Remedial Teaching
1977 - 1980 All Saints Interparochial School, Wickliffe, OH, Librarian,
Substitute Teacher
1980 - 1983 Our Lady of Good Counsel, Cleveland, OH, Ass't. Librarian,
Tutor, Substitute Teacher
1983 - 12/83 Head Start, Joliet, IL, Teacher's Aide, CCD
12/83- 1987 Motherhouse, Joliet, IL, Retired
1987 - 1993 Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL, Retired

Wake: Monday, January 11, 1993 2-7 p.m. Prayer Service 4:30 p.m.
Our Lady of Angels, Joliet

Mass of Christian Burial: Monday, January 11, 1993 at 7:00 p.m.

Burial: Tuesday, January 12, 1993 at Resurrection Cemetery

Survived by her brother Andrew, sisters Margaret Stofko and Julia Balicki and families, nieces and cousins

*For those who have been faithful, O Lord,
life is not ended, but merely changed.*

Sister Petronette was born to George and Anna Hrbal in the town of Mala Revuca, Austria-Hungary on October 12, 1908, the eldest of seven children. At Baptism, she was given the name of Marie Cecilia. When she was only three years old, she boarded the S.S. Ultenia with her mother, to join her father already in America, preparing a place for his family in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. It was there in St. Stephen's Parish that Marie lived and where their family values were nourished. No doubt Marie's father was one who helped her to grow in her trust in God's loving care and faithfulness, for she writes of her father, that "he stood by me when everyone else tried to discourage me when I decided to enter the convent." So with his blessing and support, Marie, at age 21, became a postulant with the Joliet Franciscans. At her reception into Novitiate, on August 12, 1924, she was given the name of Sister Petronette.

Sister Petronette began teaching at St. Clement School in Chicago in 1925. Her ministry of education led her to many schools in Illinois and Ohio as well as to places in Alabama, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. For over sixty years Sister Petronette served as teacher, principal, librarian, receptionist and tutor. St. Joseph School in Joliet claimed twelve of those years in education and Assumption School in Chicago, eighteen. Even in her retirement years at the Motherhouse, she found joy in working in the tutoring program in addition to maintaining her dedicated work of crocheting.

In the years between World War I and World War II, she completed the requirements for U.S. Citizenship and fulfilled requirements for earning a Bachelor's Degree with a major in history at the College of St. Francis. It is significant that her dissertation topic was the Lords Baltimore, and her research led her to study the voyage of their vessels, the Ark and the Dove in 1633, noting that the expedition was committed to "the protection of God, and of His most holy Mother" similar to the voyage of her own life. The documents for citizenship describe Sister Petronette as an upright person genuinely interested in the good of the country, avidly participating in such projects as American Junior Red Cross sponsorship, sale of Defense stamps, as well as cooperation with many civic and patriotic projects. It is no wonder that Sister Petronette was always interested in an animated discussion of politics or government. Even as she applied for citizenship she had two brothers engaged in military service, and another hospitalized because of being wounded in action in North Africa.

Sister Petronette was a woman of prayer and a woman of faith. Her life's journey took her over many miles and many countries, but she never lost sight of the fact that her true citizenship was in heaven and her call was to serve those in need and to help her students to learn and to make the world better. Sister Petronette's journey brought her back to Joliet in 1983. Nearly ten years later, on January 8, she made her final journey, going forth to meet her God and to make her home with God forever in heaven.

Sister Petronette, we thank you for making us such a vital part of your life's voyage. May all those whose lives you have touched as principal, educator, family member, sister, friend, give thanks for the richness you have brought into our lives. May you continue to pray for us and to pray that our government be guided to make choices that are wise and just. May you have lasting peace in God's holy city, enjoying your true citizenship in heaven for all eternity. Amen. Alleluia.

