

SISTER BERNADETTE KOPP, O.S.F. (Aquinas) 707

Born: September 30, 1935
Parents: William A. and Mary (Harris) Kopp
Postulancy: September 2, 1952
Novitiate: August 13, 1953
First Profession: August 12, 1955
Final Profession: August 13, 1958
Died: Monday, November 16, 1992 at 9:33 a.m.
at Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, Illinois



Ministry:

1955 - 1956 Sacred Heart (Englewood), Chicago, IL, Grade 5, Organist
1956 - 1957 St. Mary, Plainfield, IL, Grades 4, 5
1957 - 1959 St. John the Baptist, Joliet, IL, Organist, Music Teacher
1959 - 1961 St. Pascal, Chicago, IL, Organist, Music Teacher
1961 - 1962 St. Peter and Paul, Chicago, IL, Organist, Music Teacher
1962 - 1964 St. Paul the Apostle, Joliet, IL, Organist, Choir, Violin lessons
Music Teacher
1964 - 1965 Immaculate Conception, Columbus, OH, Organist, Music Teacher
1965 - 1969 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, Music Teacher, Organist,
String Ensemble, Chorus, Private music lessons
1969 - 1970 St. Boniface, Chicago, IL, residence
1970 - 1971 Study at University of Iowa, Iowa City
1971 - 1973 College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL
1973 - 1975 Student, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
1975 - 1981 College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL, Teaching Music, Assistant
Professor of Music
1981 - 1984 Mt. St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, CA, Assistant
Administrator of De Camera Society, private music lessons
1984 - 1992 Loyola Marymount, Santa Monica, CA, private music lessons,
Director Preparatory Music Program

Wake: Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL, Wednesday, November 18, 1992
2-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 4:30 p.m.

Mass of Christian Burial:

Burial will be at St. Mary Cemetery, 87th Street and Hamlin Avenue,
Evergreen Park, IL on Thursday, November 19, leaving OLA 9:30 a.m.

Survived by: Aunt Nell Harris, cousins, and friends.

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

Mary Bernadette Kopp was born in Chicago, Illinois to William Kopp and Mary Harris Kopp on September 30, 1935 and was baptized at St. Nicholas Church on Chicago's South Side. Her sister, Rita, was older by about ten years, and a brother, William, had died as an infant about a year before Bernadette was born. Bernadette attended grade school in Tinley Park and as a high school student commuted to St. Francis Academy in Joliet, where she was soon recognized as a top scholar and an accomplished musician, playing first violin in the school orchestra.

Bernadette entered the Postulancy in September of 1953, was received into the Novitiate the following August and given the name of Sister Mary Aquinas. Music was an important part of Sister's life as a young teacher and throughout her years of ministry. Many of her students received honors for their excellence in musical performance. Sister Bernadette, too, was often honored for her musical ability, including a full scholarship to Iowa State University for Graduate Study in Music. Many remember the brilliant performance at Franciscan Showcase, 1985, when Sister Bernadette and Sister Margaret Kelly played the "Carnival of Animals", with Sister Mercia Gillivan narrating.

Even as Sister Bernadette continued to be scholar and musician for so much of her life, sickness and pain also seemed to be her constant companions. When Sister Bernadette realized she could no longer be productive with her music, she began a Graduate Program in library science, probably inspired by the work of Sister Carol Ann Novak, her longtime friend. It was only earlier this month that Sister Bernadette formally declined an offer to work in the library at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, California. In spite of her suffering and illness, Bernadette truly fought the good fight, and on November 16, she finished the race and went to receive the merited crown of which we read in Scripture. The previous Friday, several of the Sisters in her class had visited Sister Bernadette. When Sister Maria Pesavento came to visit her, Sister Bernadette spent time telling her what needed to be done with her things still in California, especially some of the musical instruments Bernadette knew she would not play again, and she shared with Sister Maria some of the musical selections she had chosen for her funeral Liturgy. Her Aunt Nell Harris, also a resident at Our Lady of Angels, who held young Bernadette in her arms when she was a newborn, gently held Bernadette's hand as she was born again into eternal life, surrounded by a group of Sisters, including Sister Alice Emile, members of the Central Administration, several of her classmates and members of the OLA nursing staff (one of whom had been her music pupil). It is significant that as Sister Bernadette drew her last breaths, a piano concerto was heard over the radio a friend had brought to her just the night before so she could enjoy her classical music.

Sister Bernadette, we thank you for the gifts and talents of your life that you have shared with so many. We ask you to continue to pray for each of us, your Sisters, your family members, and your friends so that we may continue to bring harmony into the world through the gift of music and through promoting peace in our world. May your eternal life resound in harmony with God forever. Amen. Alleluia.

