

Alleluia!

Sister Catherine Pesche, OSF



Sister Catherine Pesche was born in Chicago, Illinois on December 31, 1916 to Ferdinand and Helen Leider Pesche. Baptized Catherine Elizabeth at St. Nicholas Church in Evanston, Illinois, she was the oldest of eleven children. She was preceded in death by her sister, Lorraine. Catherine is survived by seven sisters: Jeanne, Bette, Helen, Dolores, Mary, Rita and Alice and by two brothers: Fred and Frank.

When Catherine was five years old and visiting relatives in Luxembourg, she became ill with polio, which caused muscle deterioration in her left leg. However, as she once wrote, "This handicap did not prevent me from climbing trees and doing things the boys did, much to the worry of my father."

Catherine graduated from St. Mary's Grade School and St. Patrick's Academy in Des Plaines, Illinois. As a senior she began asking for permission to enter the Congregation. Her requests were not answered and Catherine feared that it was because "Mother Thomasine knew she had a lame leg." In 1997 in *A Patchwork Quilt*, Catherine wrote "One day when Mother Thomasine was in Des Plaines visiting the Sisters, they rode past the Pesche farm. One of the Sisters said to Mother, 'There are the Pesche children working in their father's field.' Mother asked, 'Is Catherine among them?' When the Sister replied, 'Yes,' Mother responded, 'If she can work in the field, she can work in the convent!'" And so, on September 8, 1935 Catherine entered the Postulancy. On August 12, 1936 she became a novice and received the name, Sister Mary Ferdinand. When given the opportunity after the Second Vatican Council, she returned to her baptismal name.

After profession of vows on August 12, 1938, Catherine spent the next year completing her undergraduate work and received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from the College of St. Francis in 1939. She later earned a Master of Education Degree from the University of Illinois and did post graduate work at various colleges and universities including Fordham, Loyola, DePaul and Catholic University.

In 1939 Sister Catherine began her 58 years of ministry in just four different educational institutions. She taught

for six years at St. Francis de Sales High School, Chicago; spent 5 ½ years (5 of them as Assistant Principal) at her Alma Mater, St. Mary's, Des Plaines; 11 years as Assistant Principal at St. Francis Academy, Joliet and a total of 36 years at the now University of St. Francis, Joliet. There, through the years, she ministered in the Library and the Admissions Office and spent the last 21 years in the Financial Aid Office from which she retired in 1997.

Above all, Sister Catherine loved being a Sister of St. Francis. She once wrote that it didn't matter to her how many Sisters she lived with, but what was important was living in "genuine charity that allows for deficiencies of others and the patience to live with each other." To her community life meant sharing prayer, meals and recreation. When she resided at the Motherhouse, she could often be found in a community room working crossword puzzles, especially with her good friend Sister Margaret Duffy, and watching The Lawrence Welk Show.

Two years ago, as Catherine became weaker, she moved to Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home. She had not been feeling well for a while, yet, last Friday she was still up and about, even able to take meals in the dining room. On Saturday, after complaining of much pain, she was taken to Provena St. Joseph Medical Center. It was there on Sunday, June 2, just before noon surrounded by some of her family and her Franciscan Sisters, that Catherine peacefully went home to her God.

Sister Catherine, we thank you for the 66 years you spent with us as educator, sister and friend. As you begin your eternity with the God you served so faithfully throughout your life, remember us your family, your friends, your Franciscan Sisters. Amen. Alleluia!

Sister Catherine Pesche, OSF
31 December 1916 - 2 June 2002

Born: December 31, 1916; Chicago, Illinois 821
Parents: Ferdinand and Helen (Leider) Pesche
Entered From: St. Mary Parish, Des Plaines, Illinois
Postulancy: September 8, 1935
Novitiate: August 12, 1936
Profession: August 12, 1938
Entered New Life: Sunday, June 2, 2002, at Provena-St. Joseph Hospital, Joliet, IL at 11:55 a.m.

Ministry History

1939 - 1945 Teacher; History, Latin & English; St. Francis de Sales H.S., Chicago, IL
1945 - 1951 Assistant Librarian; College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL
1951 - Sem II Teacher; J.H. History; St. Mary's School, Des Plaines, IL
1951 - 1962 Assistant Principal; St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL
1962 - 1971 Director of Admissions; College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL
1971 - 1976 Assistant Principal; St. Mary's School, Des Plaines, IL
1976 - 1997 Assistant Director for Financial Aid; College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL
1997 - 2000 Community Service; St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL
2000 - 2002 Retired; Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home, Joliet, IL

Wake: Thursday, June 6, 2002, 2 - 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL
Wake Service: Thursday, June 6, 2002, 4:30 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL
Mass of Christian Burial: Thursday, June 6, 2002, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, IL
Burial: Friday, June 7, 2002; leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m.
to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, IL

Interment S8 - L334 - G10

Survived by: Sisters Jeanne (Robert) Poblaski, Bette Pesche, Helene (Leroy) Englebacher, Dolores (Eugene) Koeune, Mary (Richard) Skala, Rita (Jerry) Kwasegroch, Alice Kalal, and brothers Fred (Shirley) Peshe and Frank (Mary) Pesche and many nieces and nephews.

Rest in Peace, Sister Catherine