

SISTER CATHERINE AGNES HOLPP
October 17, 1911 — October 21, 2007

Margaret Ella Holpp was born on October 17, 1911. She was the seventh child to John and Ella Holpp. Margaret had five brothers and two sisters. The family lived in Hazelwood and the children attended Saint Stephen's Grade School. She entered the Sisters of Charity on March 25, 1928.

Father Philip Dugan the assistant pastor wrote this in his letter . . . "Reverend Mother Superior, Margaret Ella Holpp is a member of Saint Stephen's Church. Her character is excellent, and as far as I know she is a fit subject for the novitiate. She went through Saint Stephen's School, and is now at Sacred Heart High School."

Tonight, we celebrate Sister Catherine Agnes and her life of 96 years. Seventy-nine of those years she lived as a faithful Sister of Charity.

After earning a bachelor's degree in education from Duquesne University in 1948, Sister Catherine Agnes spent her years in active ministry as a first grade teacher.

Her nieces who visited yesterday said that Sister always said she loved to teach the first graders. They came to school in September being babies but left in June having achieved so much independence, knowledge, and growth.

On November 1, 2006, Sister received a card from a student she taught at Saint John the Baptist in 1963. It reads:

Dear Sister Catherine Agnes,

My name is Pat Nolan Glatz. You taught me in first grade at Saint John the Baptist in 1963. I brought you a statue from Saint Anne de Beaupre in Canada.

Anyway, I went on a retreat and saw Sister Mary Clark. She told me where you were. I was overjoyed. I am sorry for your ailments, dear Sister Catherine.

I loved you as a child, and I often wondered where you were and what grade you were teaching throughout my life. In some of the harder times I thought of your gentleness and it got me through. I want you to know you meant the world to me.

I am married. My husband and two children are all gifts from God.

Sister, I am so blessed to know you are still living here in Pennsylvania. God bless you and keep you in His love and mercy. I still love you. I think of you and will pray for you.

*Love and Peace,
Pat Nolan Glatz*

This is one beautiful testimony of how Sister Catherine Agnes touched the lives of her students over those many years of teaching first grade.

Last evening we heard descriptions of the beautiful character of Sister Catherine Agnes from many sisters who lived and taught with her. Some of those characteristics include:



. . . beautiful character,
. . . hard working and very precise,
. . . quiet presence.

While living in retirement at Saint Philip Convent, Sister Catherine Agnes often sat with Mrs. Fox, Sister Annina's mother. Sister Annina told me how her mother loved Sister Catherine Agnes. Sister said that it was her quiet presence that brought peace to her mother.

One cannot speak of Sister Catherine Agnes without talking about her older sister, her soul mate, Sister Rose Clare. These two sisters were very faithful to their family—their five brothers, Lawrence, Leo, Albert, Clement, and John, and their sister Catherine, as well as their many nieces and nephews.

Yesterday, their brother John's children, Marilyn, Rose Clare, and Father Larry visited. They told me how the family referred to Sister Catherine Agnes and Sister Rose Clare as “the girls!”

The girls were very faithful to one particular nephew who had spina bifida. They always sent him cards and even sent a relic of Mother Seton which was so appreciated by the family.

Catherine, their sister, lived in Aliquippa and the sisters spent holidays and vacations with Catherine and her family. In later years, Catherine was in a nursing center in Baden. Sister Catherine Agnes and Sister Rose Clare visited her every weekend. They frequently took public transportation to make those visits.

Sister Rose Clare took such good care of Sister Catherine Agnes in her years of diminishment. Every day she made many visits to her room and gave her little bites of candy. She would talk to her and pray with her. She always referred to her little sister, Sister Catherine Agnes, with such love and tenderness.

Her words at the bedside of her dear sister after her death and each time at the casket are filled with faith.

*“Now, my dear little sister, you are with God.
You will no longer be suffering. You are at peace.”*

I would like to conclude with the words from the song that completed our prayer last evening. I think they might express the thoughts of Sister Catherine Agnes as she closed her eyes in this life and open them in heaven.

Jesus, the very thought of you
fills us with sweet delight;
but sweeter far your face to view
and rest within your light.

O Jesus be our joy today;
help us to prize your love;
grant us at last to hear you say:
“Come, share my home above.”

Go in peace, our dear Sister Catherine Agnes. Enjoy your new home for all eternity.

*Funeral Liturgy Reflection
Sister Judy Laffey
October 24, 2007*