

**Sister William Ann Dailey**  
**September 2, 1915 - August 26, 2009**

Sister William Ann Dailey was a determined woman. From her early days until these last months, she lived – clearly – and confidently. She was clear in her vocation to be a Sister of Charity; she was dedicated during her years of teaching; she worked tirelessly as a nurse aide and volunteer; she outlived a serious medical diagnosis; and finally, she directed her energies toward her death and new life in eternity.



Sister William Ann, born in Hastings, Pennsylvania and later moving to Wilkinsburg, was the second child born to Julia Ruth Frey and Daniel James Dailey. She was baptized Dora Ruth. Her brothers Charles and Daniel and her sisters Leone (Patsy) and little Martina will greet her in heaven. Her sister Joan and her sister-in-law Mary Louise are here this morning along with other family members, especially her niece Lynn who spent the entire night before and the morning of Sister William Ann's death with her aunt, speaking to her and praying with her.

Sister William Ann's parents were well-educated and encouraged their children to become educated. In later years Sister William Ann said that her mother was truly a "Renaissance woman," with many talents and interests. When Sister William Ann wanted to enter the Sisters of Charity she wrote of her parents: "they are satisfied if this means happiness for me."

I first met Sister William Ann in the prime of her life and of her teaching ministry. We were both missioned to Saint Catherine's in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1955. Shortly after our arrival, we discovered that we had a very important occasion to celebrate: our mutual birthday on September 2. It was a big year for both of us: Sister William Ann was celebrating her fortieth birthday; I was 21. We were together only that one year but for the next 53, when Sister William Ann would see me, she would say, "Oh, yes, we have the same birthday!" This September 2, she will celebrate in heaven.

Actually, Sister William Ann was not thrilled about being in Arizona that one year. But she was cheerful and made the most of it, going along with everything we did. Occasionally, however, she was heard to talk about going "back to the United States," meaning Pennsylvania. I recall though how delighted she was when, at the end of the school year, the pastor at Saint Catherine's, Father Plourde, took four of us on a trip to the Grand Canyon. She enjoyed seeing everything --- and then went back to Pennsylvania.

When I knew Sister William Ann she was a very fine teacher, usually having the seventh and eighth grade – not an easy age. She was demanding of the students, but always fair. I remember that Sister William Ann's classroom was very neat and that she was a perfectionist in her personal life, as well as in her ministry.

After 48 years of teaching, when she was 67 years old, Sister William Ann moved into what she termed her “second career” – she became a Nurse Aide and later nursing assistant at Assumption Hall. Although she retired in 1998, she considered herself a volunteer at Assumption Hall and at Caritas Christi. She was always a willing and generous companion to Sisters on trips to doctors.

What motivated all this energy, this tireless activity, this determination? It doesn't take a great deal of research to learn that it was the love of Jesus Christ.

When she entered the Sisters of Charity, Sister William Ann's pastor at Saint James, Wilkinsburg, Father Stephen Walsh, wrote that she had always been earnest in her studies, her work at home, and her religious duties. In petitioning to make perpetual vows in 1938, Sister William Ann wrote to Mother Rose Genevieve (Rodgers), in flowing, perfect handwriting, “I have found real spiritual happiness in my vocation ... and I am resolved to live my life as a faithful spouse of Christ.”

Although Sister William Ann wrote that she wanted “no public publication” of her 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee, when she was 65 years in the Community, she stated that she enjoyed living as a Sister of Charity, bringing the Gospel message to God's faithful. She said that she gave thanks daily for the graces to have educated so many, and to know and love the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Of course, Sister William Ann went on to celebrate a 70<sup>th</sup> and a true diamond, a 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee last year.

She was true to her call each and every moment of every day. The nurses speak of a small custom she had of blessing herself before she took her medicine, perhaps as one would bless food. She was prayerful. She loved the Eucharist and prayed often to the Blessed Mother.

This morning, as we say farewell to Sister William Ann, somehow we hear these words, echoing throughout the universe: “Accept the crown prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

*Funeral Liturgy Reflection  
Sister Brigid Marie Grandey, SC  
August 29, 2009*