

Companions IN PRAYER



Sisters of St. Clare
Saginaw, MI

Remembering Sister Laurene

The poet Jalaluddin Rumi (1273) wrote: "Our death is our wedding into eternity." Sister Laurene, began her wedding with eternity January 16, 2021.

She was born in Columbus Ohio, was one of 10 children. Her family was surrounded by a tight knit Catholic community that provided education and parish devotion that bonded the people together.

The parish church, Corpus Christi, was the center of all activities in Laurene's home. Family life revolved around the liturgies of the parish. They were all engaged in devotion to the Sacred Heart, first Fridays, Benediction, Sodality of Mary, and the family rosary.

When Laurene was 11 years old, she developed rheumatic fever. Because antibiotics were not available at that time, the doctors advised bed rest. As a result, Laurene found herself isolated from her family and completely dependent on her mother for food and care. This experience affected her deeply and left her with a strong desire for independence.

In spite of her early health issues, from a very young age Laurene wanted to be a sister. During high school, she began looking into religious communities. Because of her fragile health, Laurene was drawn to a contemplative life. Her Aunt Helen told her that the Poor Clares were beginning a new community in nearby Canton, Ohio. Laurene was interested,

applied, and was accepted as a postulant in 1947.

In 1952, during a time of growing religious vocations in the Catholic Church, Laurene's Canton community was becoming too large. They decided to establish a new monastery in Washington, D.C. Exercising her spirit of adventure and courage, Laurene wanted to be part of establishing this new Washington D.C. community. She moved to Washington helping to start and be part of this new Monastery. After the second Vatican Council in 1965, Laurene became very interested in the changes initiated by that Council. She met sisters from the Poor Clare community in Minneapolis who were also interested in introducing the new changes in their monastic life. As a result, in 1967, she transferred to the Poor Clare monastery in Minneapolis.



This was not to be Laurene's last move toward adventure and new ideas. In 1991, Bishop Ken Untener was creating a vibrant diocese in Saginaw, Michigan. He wanted to have a contemplative community as part of his new plans. After meeting with Bishop Untener, Sr. Laurene joined Srs. Dianne, Laura, and Bernardone in accepting Bishop Untener's invitation to leave their Monastery in Minneapolis and establish a contemplative community in Saginaw.

In Saginaw, Sr. Laurene developed her talent in creative and unique ways. As a woman whose

life was devoted to prayer, Sr. Laurene says her spirituality was anchored in “gratitude for God’s redeeming love.” She often expresses her prayers in this way, “when I am creative with my hands. I often become absorbed in the abundance and creativity of God.” Over her 92 years her handiwork included macramé, crocheting, and cooking. She also enjoys making dolls and other memorabilia for her family. Her gift wrapped packages are a work of art. When not working with her hands, she enjoyed reading and classical music. She treasured her small collection of books, pictures, and other gift items from friends. She was fed by the precious memories they bring to her.

Laurene’s enthusiasm for her work sometimes knows no bounds. Several years ago, she asked her brother if she could braid an area rug for his cabin. Her brother, knowing her enthusiasm, hesitated at first. Finally, however he agreed. Laurene worked on the rug for a year. When she had it completed, it took four men to carry the rug from her room to the moving truck and install it in her brother’s cabin. It turned out that Laurene had not just made an area rug. She had made an entire 10X18 foot floor covering. Laurene’s generosity and enthusiasm in her creative work is a blessing for us all.



Sister Laurene and her floor covering

After her stroke in 2015 it became necessary for Laurene to move into assisted living. At the Community Village she reached out in appreciation to the staff for their care and dedication to seniors. She volunteered to wrap tableware for the residence meals and crocheted prayer shawls for people who are ill. She gave them freely with the promise of her continuing prayers.

The isolation due to Covid 19 was stressful for her, she missed coming home for visits and meals. In the fall of 2020, she had several strokes that started her physical decline. She also broke her hip which confined her to bed. After Christmas it was clear Laurene needed more assistance than the Community Village was designed to do. We brought her home and cared for her needs here with hospice and friends.

In her final days, she assured us she was ready and waiting for her wedding with eternity. Her wedding date was January 16, 2021. May we all be this peaceful at our death.

Sisters Dianne and Laura



Sister Laurene and Sister Bernardone

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