



St. Anne Province Center
Melbourne, Kentucky
July 25, 2023

SISTER MARY EILEEN BERTSCH

was called into eternal life

July 24, 2023

Born August 10, 1929 at home in Cold Spring, Kentucky, Sr. Mary Eileen Bertsch entered eternal life on July 24, 2023 at Holy Family Home. She was ninety-three years old and a professed member of the Congregation of Divine Providence for seventy years.

La Verne Louise was the oldest of five children born to Lawrence and Matilda Bertsch. She is survived by her brother Charles; her sisters Eileen Feldman and Margie Stormer; and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. She was preceded in death by her brother Albert.

Sr. Mary Eileen received her elementary education from the Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Joseph School in Cold Spring and became acquainted with the Sisters of Divine Providence when she attended Our Lady of Providence Academy in Newport. In her junior year, Sister sensed that God was calling her to religious life. But “in my heart,” she said, “I kept saying, ‘No, Lord, not me.’” However, God persisted, and in her senior year, she courageously shared her desire with her mother, who encouraged her to wait a bit and helped her obtain a position with Littleford Brothers, Inc. Sr. Mary Eileen worked there for three years, gaining invaluable knowledge and experience in the business world that would aid her in college and later as a business teacher. During this time, she also participated in the Drama Club at St. Joseph under the direction of Fr. Daniel Lally. Realizing that God really was calling her to be a nun, with the aid of Fr. Lally, she visited the Benedictines, the Sisters of Charity, and the Sisters of Divine Providence. After much prayer and discernment, Sr. Mary Eileen entered St. Anne Convent on September 8, 1950. She made her first profession of vows on August 29, 1952 and her final vows on August 29, 1957.

Sr. Mary Eileen was a dedicated and devoted educator who loved her students and was loved by them. She prepared for this important ministry by obtaining her A.B. degree from Villa Madonna College (now Thomas More University) and her M.Ed. from Xavier University in Cincinnati.

All of Sr. Mary Eileen’s places of ministry were in Kentucky. The first few years of her teaching career were at the elementary level, first at Christ the King School in Lexington from 1952 to 1953, and then at St. Thomas School in Fort Thomas from 1953 to 1958. After serving for a year as secretary for the Marriage Tribunal in the Diocese of Covington, she returned to the classroom and to St. Thomas from 1959 to 1965. There she transitioned from the elementary school to the high school and began her career as a business teacher. Sr. Mary Eileen subsequently served as a high school teacher at Our Lady of Providence Academy in Newport (1965 to 1967); at Lexington Catholic High School in Lexington (1967 to 1968); and at Good Shepherd High School in Frankfort (1968 to 1970). Sister then returned to Our Lady of Providence Academy from 1970 until it closed in 1983. During this time, she also coordinated the C.C.D. program at St. Philip Parish in Melbourne (1979 to 1980).

Teaching young children had always been Sr. Mary Eileen's preference, and for the next several years she taught first or second graders and loved doing it, first at St. Camillus Academy in Corbin from 1983 to 1987, and then at Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Hebron from 1987 to 2001. In 2001 she returned to St. Camillus Academy as a teacher's aide, where she remained until 2007, when she retired to Holy Family Home. She ministered there in community service and as a part-time teacher's aide at St. Philip School in Melbourne until 2012. She moved to Holy Family's Health Care Center in 2018, engaging in a ministry of suffering and prayer.

Sr. Mary Eileen brought sunshine to everyone. Impressively energetic with bright dancing eyes, she had a great sense of humor, a ready smile, and a wonderful laugh. Sister was deeply prayerful, graciously considerate, and generous to all, a woman of Providence who enjoyed life to the fullest and was most attentive to God's wonderful world of nature around her.

In her reflections, Sr. Mary Eileen noted that one of her major achievements was to enable her students to like going to school. She taught the children that God loved them through her love for them. She wanted to be remembered as a Sister who loved Jesus, and who tried to get the children to know and love Jesus, too.

Sr. Mary Eileen stated that her baptism in the Holy Spirit was the most significant event in her life. She always spoke of the freedom and joy she felt when she was with others who were also filled with the Spirit, and was happily involved in the Charismatic movement. She easily spoke of how much her life of prayer was enhanced by her charismatic relationship with the Trinity.

In thanksgiving for our dear Sr. Mary Eileen and for her witness as a loving, joyful woman of Providence and as a woman of prayer, compassion, and loving service throughout her religious life, let us entrust her to the care of our Provident God.

United in God's gracious Providence,

Sister Barbara Patrick, CDP for
Sister Barbara Rohe, CDP, Provincial

Mass of Christian Burial: Friday, July 28, 2023 at 4:00 P.M.
 Immaculate Conception Chapel, Melbourne

Burial in the Convent Cemetery, Melbourne, Kentucky