

Sr. M. Adolorata Watson, OSM

Born June 2, 1915

Entered Eternal Life

June 4, 2010



As I sat by her deathbed on Friday evening, I couldn't help but think of Sr. Adolorata's poem, "Sense of Heritage." It was written one New Year's Day as she sat looking out the window at our cemetery. In part it states:

"In the distance I see the cemetery where lie
mortal remains of our Sisters,
Servants of Mary...
...Some I had known in life,
others lived before my time,
all came toward me,
incredibly free...
young, full of hope, of promise,
God's women all
who lived and shared the Good News
to a world willing to hear."

As we bury Sister, she joins these women of God, as one who in her lifetime was a women of promise and hope and who lived and shared the Good News. She has touched so many lives through her teaching and writing. Your presence here tonight attests to this.

Margaret Christine Watson was born on June 2, 1915. She was the fourth of six children born to Frederick G. Watson and Evangeline Shapter Watson in Madison, N.J. In her writings, Sister speaks very lovingly of her family, and that love was marred only by their deaths, some at a relatively young age. Margaret attended elementary and high school in Madison, and then went on to the College of St. Elizabeth. After college and in the aftermath of the Great Depression, Margaret found employment in a number of businesses from Standard Statistics Company in New York to operating the key punch machine for computer cards. She finally landed a wonderful position as secretary to the Headmaster of a boys' Prep School in Lakewood, N.J. As much as she liked this work, Margaret felt God was calling her to something else. In response to this call, Margaret entered the Servants of Mary in August of 1941 and was eventually given the name Sr. Mary Adolorata.

Sister began teaching in 1943 at Holy Name here in Omaha. Through 1975 she taught in Colorado, Iowa, Michigan and again at Holy Name. Her career also included being assigned as principal at both Holy Name High and our own Marian High School.

Sr. Adolorata had many opportunities to further her education and use what she learned though her ministry. During her teaching career, Sister earned her MA in English from Creighton University. She became well known for her work in general linguistics. Her special field of interest dealt with experimental changes being made in English instruction. Because of this, she was a frequent guest lecturer at

Creighton, Briar Cliff College in Sioux City, Duchesne and College of St. Mary here in Omaha, and the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Numerous articles were written about her work. Sister was also called upon by the Macmillan Publishing Company to write an English textbook. Many of us remember using her text for our high school English classes.

During this time of her teaching ministry, Sister served as President for the Nebraska Council of Teachers of English, Secretary for the Omaha Association of Secondary Independent Schools and Secretary of the Omaha Archdiocesan Board of Education. She also served on the State of Nebraska Department of Education English Advisory Council and their Instructional TV Advisory Council.

While she was very involved in the field of education, Sr. Adolorata was also actively involved in the work of our community. Over the years she served on a number of occasions as a General Chapter delegate. In 1970 she was chosen to serve a four year term as General Councilor. Sister also played a very active role on the community's Constitution Committee in 1978 and 1979.

In the mid '70s Sr. Adolorata earned another Masters degree. This time it was in theology from Boston College. The focus of her educational ministry then turned from high school English to religion teacher, adult education director and resource theologian. Sister served both in Kearney, NE and Des Moines, IA in these positions. During this time she provided many classes, workshops and retreats. Her files are filled with numerous articles about the work she was doing. Her files also include the many newspaper articles she wrote for the Omaha Archdiocesan newspaper. These were written as part of a series on Social Justice/Gospel Living. Also included among her writings were two articles written for Liguori Publications entitled "Mary, Mother for Today's Christian," and "Mary, Woman of Faith." Sister's great love for our Blessed Mother was most evident in her life and her writings. This was evidenced in her booklet about the Seven Sorrows of Mary.

In 1977-78, Sister attended a number of archives workshops. This topic enticed her and got her ready for yet another focus in ministry, namely as community archivist, which she began in 1986. As she served as archivist, Sr. Adolorata was also very active in the Omaha community. She was a member of Toastmasters and also a docent for the Joslyn Art Museum. These were two activities she loved dearly.

This summary, while not including all Sister has accomplished, certainly highlights her vast interests and gifts. She was indeed a talented woman who was respected and admired by so many. Sr. Mary Adolorata was, of course, also a Servant of Mary, and her love of community life and our patroness, Our Mother of Sorrows, played a paramount role in her life.

As we end this evening, I share another stanza of the poem with which I began, and say that Sr. Adolorata now is part of our Servite heritage.

“...My Sisters all,
dear to me,
bonded in mutual love,
holding out to me, to us,
a sense of heritage
handed on throughout the years
from those who lived before
to us who live today.”

Sr. Mary Gehringer, OSM
Provincial