



We commend to your charity the soul of our beloved

Sister Mary Providence Kriley

Who departed this life on March 16, 2018

In the seventy-third year of her religious life

Age: 90 years, 8 months, 9 days

Liturgy of Resurrection: Wednesday, March 21, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.

Sister Mary Providence (Catherine) was the ninth of twelve children born to Charles and Catherine (Kuhn) Kriley. When she entered religious life from St. Mary parish in Herman, Pennsylvania, she followed the path of three of her aunts, a number of cousins, and two of her siblings, Sister Sylvester and Sister Mary, into the same community!

Mary Providence was an excellent student. After graduating from Divine Providence Academy, she later earned a Bachelor's Degree in mathematics from Emmanuel College in Boston and a Master's degree in biology with a minor in mathematics from Villanova University. It was not surprising that her first ministry was as an educator. Mary Providence enjoyed teaching math and science to high school students in the States for ten years, with no expectation that she would ever minister anywhere else. However, in 1957, the Provincial Director, Mother Mary Kenneth, came for a visit to St. Mary School in Sharpsburg where Mary Providence was teaching. Surprisingly, Mother asked her if she would be willing to minister in Puerto Rico. Describing that encounter, Sister Mary Providence loved to relate how she explained to the Provincial that she couldn't do that because she didn't know Spanish. She was more than a little surprised when Mother Mary Kenneth responded, "You don't need to; you'll be teaching in English." That settled the only problem she had presented to the Provincial, so, when the next school year began, Mary Providence was teaching in Puerto Rico. She ministered there for 31 years and learned to love the beauty of the place, the goodness of the people, and the simplicity of her students. When community or family obligations often brought her back to the States in the summers, Mary Providence would quip: "winter in the tropics; summer "up north!" That understated wit served Mary Providence well as she embraced fifty years as a missionary, teacher, and pastoral minister in Puerto Rico, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.

As the Sisters of Divine Providence celebrate 25 years of community ministry in Santo Domingo, we are especially grateful to Sr. Mary Providence who was one of the pioneering founders of that mission. During her years there, she actively participated in parish life, spending time with the people, encouraging them in their faith and listening to their problems. She was often at the St. Martin de Porres Center, doing whatever was needed at the moment. She dedicated her time to the elderly people who visited the Center daily. She was a Providential presence and advocate for the blind, the infirm, the mentally handicapped, and the lonely. She ate and prayed with the people there, and also visited the homebound sick, bringing both kind words and the Eucharist to them. Both in name and in deed—she was "Providence" to all who knew her.

Sister Mary Providence was the perfect exemplar of the truth that the missionary is both giver and receiver, as is evidenced in the words she wrote in 1991: *"Daily, when I see ladies carrying water in the early morning to supply this daily necessity, men trying to sell hot buns, fruit, vegetables and eggs, children on the way to school, other little ones without shoes and a few without any clothes at all, I am reminded of a perpetual Exodus on the way to the Promised Land. In the meantime, I continue to try to be a presence of a Provident God to them, as each dear person is One for me."*

In these waning days of the annual Lenten journey, may we rejoice in the certain confidence that Mary Providence has prepared the way before us and is already at home with the Risen One, where we will all one day meet again.

Birthday: July 8
Sister Michele Bisbey