



We commend to your charity the soul of our beloved



Sister Bernadette Chapin

who departed this life on October 17, 2014
in the fiftieth year of her religious life

Age: 67 years, 8 months, 6 days

Resurrection Service: Monday, October 20, 2014,
at 3:30 p.m., Providence House Chapel

*Healer of our every ill, light of each tomorrow, give us peace beyond
our fear, and hope beyond our sorrow. (Marty Haugen 1987)*

Bonita Mae Chapin, with three brothers, was born to Stanley and Ida (Bissonnette) Chapin. She attended Sacred Heart High School in Kingston, MA, an educational ministry of the Sisters of Divine Providence, as a resident student. Immediately after high school, feeling God's call "to give herself completely to Christ" [letter dated 1966], and drawn by the relationships she had already built with the Sisters, Bonnie entered the Community, initially being named Sister Mary Stanley and later changing her name to Sister Bernadette.

A bright, creative woman, Sister Bernadette became a teacher and taught in Stamford, Connecticut and at Sacred Heart Schools in Kingston. She loved the children and as an educator always looked for new ways to engage and enrich her students through special projects. While teaching in Kingston, Sister Bernadette had her own Girl Scout troop and could be found planning trips and camping expeditions and working to raise funds to provide other opportunities to stretch the girls' learning and experiences. She was many talented, doing many kinds of crafts and happy to share her many gifts with others, including her ingenuity in designing and building large doll houses with all the furnishings. In her last years of ministry, for eight years, Sister Bernadette successfully transformed a local doughnut shop into Santa's workshop and reached out to provide toys and clothes to over 130 children in 50 families.

Sister Bernadette always wanted to be a registered nurse and, while teaching full-time, she began her studies. Despite serious illness in the midst of those studies, she received her degree and was able to serve as a nurse in hospitals in St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Massachusetts, as well as with the VNA in Plymouth, MA. Afflicted with various illnesses and a very slow-growing brain tumor, Sister Bernadette's nursing career was relatively brief and her life of active ministry ended sooner than she had hoped.

Sister Bernadette kept close relationships with her brothers and their families and took great pride in their accomplishments and those of their children and grandchildren. She was a faithful and dedicated volunteer at Sacred Heart Bingo, every Friday for many years. Sister Ida Mary and other Sisters, along with many friends from Bingo and the Girl Scouts, continued to visit and offer support to Sister Bernadette during her many years of physical diminishment.

As a woman who in her youth was sometimes jokingly referred to as "the energizer bunny," a commentary on her energy and playfulness, Sister Bernadette's final years were ironically lived out in silence with very little interaction with others. Uncomplaining in these recent years, she patiently accepted the loving care given to her so faithfully by the Sisters and nurses of Lourdes Center.

As she has entered the joy of eternal life, fear is replaced by peace, pain and sorrow disappear into total healing, and darkness is replaced by the light of Christ. Sister Bernadette wrote in a letter dated 1968, "My goal for the spiritual life is a constant awareness of the presence of God, for I feel all else flows from this." Now, finally, we rejoice with her that her goal is reached and the presence of God fills her being.

Birthday: February 11
SMFF