



We commend to your charity the soul of our beloved

Sister Dolores Elizabeth Werling

who departed this life on December 13, 2014

in the eighty-sixth year of her religious life

Age: 100 years, 10 months, 10 days

Resurrection Service: Tuesday, December 16, 2014 at 3:30 p.m.

“The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to prisoners...” Isaiah 61:1 (first reading for the third Sunday of Advent)

As the Community at Providence Heights was preparing for Gaudete Sunday, Sister Dolores Elizabeth quietly slipped away. While the Community did not anticipate her passing, perhaps Sr. Dolores Elizabeth anticipated the readings of this third Sunday in Advent. The three readings are linked together in an exceptional way. Isaiah is awaiting the great jubilee year, Paul, in First Thessalonians expects the second coming of Jesus, and John’s Gospel declares that: The One Whom you await is already among you...”

Sister Dolores Elizabeth, formerly called Sister Mary Ferdinand, was the fifth of the eight children of Mary Elizabeth Beck and J. Ferdinand Werling. She entered the Community from St. Martin’s Parish in West End in 1929. She marked two special events during the past year—her centenarian celebration and her diamond “plus” jubilee. She fully participated in this year’s Diamond Jubilee, a celebration for those marking 75 and 80 years in the congregation; she, of course, was celebrating 85 years of commitment to the Congregation.

Following the novitiate, Sister Dolores Elizabeth began her training in nursing at St. John’s General Hospital. She immediately began her nursing career at Braddock General Hospital. She ministered there for eleven years, followed by one year as infirmarian at the Motherhouse. She was then asked to study anesthesiology, a two year program, at St. John’s Hospital in Springfield, Illinois. On the completion of the program, she returned to Braddock General Hospital as a nurse anesthetist and over the years her practice of nurse anesthesia would extend to Ohio Valley Hospital, Divine Providence Hospital and eventually to St. Joseph Hospital in Warren, Ohio. She also made her rounds as a nurse to most of the community’s sponsored ministry—St. Joseph Military School, Divine Providence Academy and San Rosario Nursing Home. Over the fifty years, she practiced nursing, Dolores Elizabeth was a loving, caring and compassionate person who could relate to patients of all ages and stages of health. She was a healer in true sense of the word, the kind of healer referenced in Isaiah 61:1. When interviewed for her jubilee celebration, she said that her life in nursing and anesthesia stand out as significant threads in her life journey. She admitted that nursing was challenging at times, but she loved and enjoyed her work. The Sister Nurses lived where they worked and were often called on to “fill in” for others who called off work. She said that as she administered anesthesia, she would always whisper a short prayer to help reassure the patient that “all will be well.” In anesthesia, she knew patients were going to a deeper place in their being and she would say, “God go with you.” In her retirement, she found prayer, both communal and personal, to be very important part. She liked communal prayer because during her active years, the Sister Nurses were not always able to be together for prayer when they were staffing hospitals and working different shifts. As we celebrate the year of Consecrated Life, we would all do well by taking the advice she gave when filling out her jubilee questionnaire this past year. “If you think God is speaking to you, be sure to listen, pray and only then, act.”

We, the Community of Sr. Dolores Elizabeth, are grateful for her 50 years of healing ministry. In the spirit of Isaiah, we pray that we can learn to be healers of those in need, to be with them in their brokenness. We pray that we too can restore those to whom we minister to wholeness. With her, let us rejoice in the Lord always!

Feastday: September 15
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