



SISTER IGNATIA LORDEMANN, OSB
October 12, 1910 - November 3, 2006,

Immaculata Monastery
Norfolk, Nebraska, U.S.A.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you: I have called you by name: you are mine. (Is. 43:6)

This antiphon, which we sang at Lauds on the first Friday of November, seemed fitting praise of God for our dear Sister Ignatia who had been called home to heaven at 4:35 that morning. A few weeks after we had celebrated our oldest member's 96th birthday, Sr. Ignatia Lordemann had suffered a massive stroke. As she lay dying, sisters and some relatives took turns watching at her bedside until she passed away peacefully.

Frances Barbara Marie Lordemann was born on October 12, 1910, and was baptized at St. Bonaventure Church in Raeville, Nebraska, two days later. She was the tenth of twelve children of the farmer William Lordemann and his wife Elizabeth Schaefer. The deeply religious, happy and hard-working family was blessed with two sets of twins and three religious vocations, Fr. William Lordemann (+ in 1967) and two Missionary Benedictine Sisters. Four of the children died in infancy. Sister Ignatia outlived all her siblings.

Having completed elementary schooling at St. John Berchmans School in Raeville, Marie Lordemann attended St. John the Baptist High School at Petersburg and then one year at the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, an uncommon privilege in those days, which she appreciated. In 1929 she began teaching in rural Nebraska schools of Antelope and Boon County, riding a horse or driving a car to school and teaching all eight grades.

Since 1923 the Missionary Benedictine Sisters were serving in her home parish of Raeville. In August 1936 Marie and her younger sister Rose entered our community, became novices in 1937 as Sister Ignatia and Sister Alice, and together made their first profession on June 25, 1938. Sr. Alice died in 1992.

Sister Ignatia's life and energies were devoted to educating the young people in Raeville, Madison, Winnebago and Columbus. She served not only as teacher and principal, but often was also the local superior and parish organist. On Saturdays and many summers, she taught Bible and catechism classes in parishes that lacked a Catholic school.

From 1951 to 1957, Sr. Ignatia served in Norfolk as mistress of novices, secretary of the prioress, and frequently as driver. She was elected as delegate to the general chapter of 1957, which met in Grottaferrata near Rome.

After the community took on service at St. Augustine's Indian Mission in Winnebago, Nebraska, Sr. Ignatia was among the first group of our sisters there, engaging herself whole-heartedly to raise the standard of the school

and caring for the children with a great respect for their culture. She worked also as a house parent for the boarding students. A total of over 20 years of Sr. Ignatia's life was dedicated to mission work at Winnebago.

Sr. Ignatia not only motivated her students to learn, but true to St. Benedict's vision of a monastery as a School of the Lord's Service, she remained a learner all her life, keeping an open mind for trends and new insights. She attended summer classes at several colleges and universities, obtaining her Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Mary's College in Omaha at long last, in 1963.

Faithfulness to duty and a deep sense of responsibility marked Sr. Ignatia's character. She wrote letters to her former novices and students and always was interested in their development. While she was directress of formation, she had inquired of the young sisters who might want to become teachers and it was at her recommendation that several were sent to study, an effort they still appreciate to this day. As superior, she could be quite strict, insisting on monastic discipline in the community. Even though Sr. Ignatia bore much responsibility and had plenty of work, she readily contributed to entertainment and programs on feastdays. She used to ask what Eve's first words in paradise were, referring to her family name. Answer: "Lord, a man!"

After her teaching years, Sr. Ignatia served as a parish liturgist, patient visitor and superior in Graceville, Minnesota, then as assistant portress and librarian at Norfolk. As her health declined, she suffered several falls and other ailments of old age. During her last years in the infirmary, Sr. Ignatia spent many hours in prayer, at times distressed when the infirmarian wanted to take her out of chapel.

We thank God for the long, blessed life of Sister Ignatia and her example of good zeal in our community.

May she now enjoy the reward of her labors!

Sr. Kevin Hermsen, Prioress,
and Communities of Norfolk Priory