Reflection on the Life of Sister Kathleen Dorman
April 16, 1935–March 3, 2013

Mary Kathleen Dorman was born April 16, 1935—the birthday of Pope Benedict XVI as well as that of Sister Consuelo Pacheco. Sisters Kathleen and Consuelo used to say they were twins, both born at the same time—one on the east coast and one on the west coast. The youngest daughter of William and Estelle Dorman, Kathleen had one brother, Matthew James, and two sisters, Rose and Betty. Sister Kathleen's parents and siblings are all deceased. Sister Kathleen has a number of nieces and nephews as well as grandnieces and nephews, many of them here with us this evening. Kathleen was baptized at Saint Luke's in Carnegie and attended Saint Luke's elementary and high school. Kathleen Dorman entered the Sisters of Charity September 8, 1953. On her application Sister Kathleen stated, "I want to become a religious because I feel God is calling me to the religious life. I want to go to the Sisters of Charity because I know that order better than any other. I have been taught by the Sisters of Charity in grade and high school."

Kathleen Dorman received the name Sister Mary Berenice in 1954 in honor of her mother. When given the opportunity, Kathleen chose to return to her baptismal name.

Over the years, Sister Kathleen became identified with the Wizard of Oz characters. Throughout her life, she sought to find what the "Tin Man", "Scarecrow" and "Lion" searched for.

The "Lion" was in search of courage. Sister Kathleen exemplified courage in the face of many obstacles. When Kathleen was 12 years old, she lost her mother to cancer. So with the guidance of her father, brother, and sisters, she struggled through her teenage years. She often talked about how the Sisters of Charity helped her family through these times. Then when Sister Kathleen was in the novitiate, her father died. It takes a lot of courage to be positive in approaching life when one loses both parents so young. Kathleen was always positive.

Kathleen was also adventuresome. She was invited to join Monsignor Royer and his group from Lakewood to travel to Indonesia to view and photograph a solar eclipse that could only be seen there.

In 1985, the Sisters of Charity withdrew from Saint Pancratius School, where Sister Kathleen taught at the time. In 1991, there was an opening for a second grade teacher at the school. Sister Kathleen gained approval from the community to apply for the position. She was hired and spent 10 more years serving the Saint Pancratius school and parish communities.

The "Tin Man" was searching for a heart so he could show his love. Kathleen had a heart. She did not need to be searching for one. Sister Kathleen's love was reflected to all the students she taught over 46 years. All of her teaching was done in the primary grades, either first or second. When she taught the second graders, she was the happiest. During these times, she prepared

students to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Throughout those months of preparation, Sister Kathleen was always beaming with joy in anticipation for each of her students. Sister Kathleen's love for the Eucharist was shared with every student. As they came to share this love, they were just as excited as she was when the day of reception came.

The "Scarecrow" was looking for a brain so he could be wise. Sister Kathleen was a good student in grade school and high school as well as when she did her undergraduate work at Seton Hill. While she was teaching at Saint Pancratius School in Lakewood, Sister Kathleen pursued a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education. Over the years, Sister Kathleen used her education to constantly improve her methods of teaching. Talk with any of her former students from Pittsburgh, Altoona, Phoenix, Ajo, Chandler, Bethesada, Greensburg, and lastly, Saint Pancratius in California, where Sister Kathleen taught for 25 years during three different time frames. You will hear only words of praise and gratitude for the excellent education they received from Sister Kathleen. At her farewell party, one student said, "Sister Kathleen, you are truly a daughter of Elizabeth Seton."

Most especially, Sister Kathleen could be identified with Dorothy. In the same way that Dorothy went busily from place to place trying to get back to Kansas, Sister Kathleen was busy about many things in addition to teaching in the classroom. Sister Kathleen trained altar servers, ministered to the sick in hospitals and homes, worked at the parish office, prepared children for proclaiming the Word at liturgies, served meals in a soup kitchen, and even coordinated weddings. Monsignor Royer said, "Sister Kathleen's name was whispered in the ear of God. Her footsteps may be followed, but she will never be replaced in the hearts of many who remember and honor her."

When Sister Kathleen came to Caritas Christi, she was thrilled to be asked to be a Eucharistic minister for the Sisters. Sister Kathleen touched the hearts of many in her simple way. She was gentle, sweet, kind, peaceful, and generous with her time. As she said, "In doing everything for God, the best I can, I can do good for other people."

The song we sang last night sums up Sister Kathleen.

"My God, I am not proud. I do not look for things too great.
My God, I trust in you. You care for me, you give me peace.
Like a child rests in its mother's arms, so I will rest in you."

Funeral Liturgy Reflection
~Sister Mary Norbert Long
March 5, 2013