

REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF SISTER INEZ MARY BECKEL

June 6, 1912–December 18, 2014



Sister Inez Mary Beckel was born on June 6, 1912, in Altoona Pennsylvania, the youngest child of Frank Beckel and Stella Vaught. Sister entered the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill from Saint Leo the Great Parish in Altoona, on Sept. 8, 1932. Her blood sister, Sister Stella Marie Beckel, had preceded Sister Inez Mary in entering the congregation.

Sister earned two Music Education degrees from Duquesne University, a bachelor's degree in 1955 and a master's degree in 1960. This background was the basis of a long and fruitful career. Sister Inez Mary served as an elementary teacher, CCD teacher, music teacher, choir director, and librarian in the Dioceses of Pittsburgh, Altoona-Johnstown, Tucson, and the Archdiocese of Washington, DC. Of her 50 years of active ministry, Sister Inez Mary's longest tenure was at Saints Peter and Paul School, Tucson, Arizona, where she served as a librarian and CCD teacher for 22 years. Many children benefited from piano lessons with Sister. She made mastering keyboard skills enjoyable. Piano recitals ended each year of study! Many parish choir members were enriched by participating in Christmas pageants and springtime choral performances as well as singing at many parish and school liturgies.

Active ministries that evolved from her numerous assignments as elementary teacher and music director were always done well. Here is just one of many compliments she received: "I take this opportunity to thank you for your five years of service as first the assistant sacristan and then as sacristan in Saint Joseph Chapel at Seton Hill. You have performed your duties in a most efficient and edifying manner. You will be a hard act to follow."

In 1994, Sister Inez Mary returned to Greensburg where she volunteered at Seton Hill University as a librarian and sacristan until 1999. Sister Inez Mary was an active volunteer for the congregation while continuing her ministry of prayer.

Active participation in local fun-filled outings were a part of “retirement.” If there was a trip or contest for the elderly, Sister Inez Mary was there. She participated in many, many fun-filled contests. One year she was the first place winner of the paddle boat competition in the 80+ age category at the Senior Games!

Sister Inez Mary Beckel, SC, celebrated her 100th birthday at a special Mass on June 2, 2012, with family members and the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. At her liturgy, the papal blessing of Pope Benedict XVI was presented to Sister Inez Mary by Sister Catherine Meinert, SC, Provincial Superior of the congregation’s United States Province.

I end with Sister Inez Mary’s most fervent wish. In her own words at the age of 102 years and six months, she said “Living religious life in the presence of God is the fulfillment of joy. May I live in this presence until eternity dawns.”

Funeral Liturgy Reflection
Sister Janet M. Neider
December 22, 2014