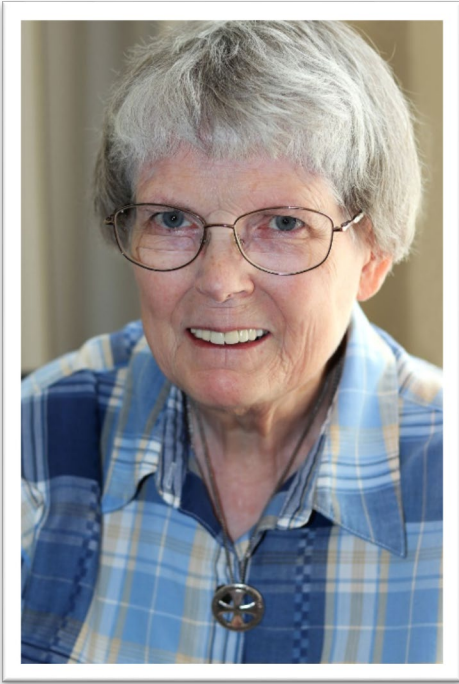


REFLECTION FOR THE FUNERAL OF SISTER CONNIE BAHL

March 22, 1942 – January 30, 2022



The Scripture stories today remind us about how we must work toward our salvation – to become like God, the “I AM” that Moses proclaimed to the Israelites. And story of the fig tree reinforces the enduring and merciful love of God as we proceed on this journey.

While I was preparing this reflection about Connie, I read a little meditation by Bishop Robert Barron on how we make sense of our own lives. It seemed a perfect introduction to this reflection because as I thought about all of the interesting and sometimes surprising facets of Connie’s life, I was struck by the fact that there was a Sister Connie that few of us ever knew!

Bishop Barron said, “To worship is to order the whole of one’s life toward the living God, and in doing so, to become interiorly and exteriorly rightly ordered. To worship is to signal to oneself what one’s life is finally about. It is nothing that God needs, but it is very much something that we need.”

So I hope that this reflection about Connie helps each of us to order our own lives but also to remember fondly the many facets of Connie’s life which perhaps we never knew.

Connie’s family members are here with us today either in person or virtually – her two sisters: Tina and Celeste and their husbands are here and her sister Carolyn is watching on livestream from California

Carolyn was only two years old when Connie entered the Sisters of Charity. When Connie was still a student at Elizabeth Seton High School, she was the Blessed Mother and Carolyn was Baby Jesus in the Christmas pageant. I was able to have a conversation with Tina and her husband, John, and Carolyn and I learned many things about Connie from them. They are obviously a close and loving family.

Connie said of herself “I am not a city girl” and “I enjoy learning new things.” These two characterizations of herself help us to understand her love of nature and the outdoors, and her belonging to the Girl Scouts who awarded her with the St. Anne Medal “in recognition of her outstanding service to the spiritual development of Catholic youth” and her lifelong love of music and singing.

Classroom teaching was difficult for Connie but she spent a good many years teaching piano, teaching the visually impaired in the Diocese of Pittsburgh and working with ESL students, as well as serving as a campus minister in Point Park and Marshall Universities and serving as a hospital chaplain in Altoona. Her zest for learning new things led her to learn speed reading, auto care (she even did a grease job on her car!), the elementary forms of Braille and sign language while working with the visually impaired and deaf students, making pottery, keen interest and talent in photography and trying to learn to play the flute.

Besides her BA in Music from Seton Hill she earned a Master's Degree from Fordham University in Arts in Religion and did some graduate study at Duquesne University. What she loved most of her many careers was being a pastoral minister in Preston County, West Virginia. She said of herself, "Nature, music and prayer. I feel blessed to be working in all three of these areas. It brings a balance to my life that I never had before."

Connie hiked the Appalachian Trail and often spent her vacation times camping and even did her renovation time living in a tent! And thanks to her sisters she got to visit Yellowstone Park a few years ago.

Connie did not enjoy the best of health but she tried her best not to be defeated by it. Connie was a unique and beautiful soul. Drawn to music from your earliest years, Connie, may the music of heaven gladden your heart and encourage you to sing eternally in the heavenly choir!

By Sister Vivien Linkhauer