

Name: Sister Malachy Donnelly
Date of Birth: December 31, 1923
Place of Birth: Kegomic, near Petoskey, Michigan
Parents: Leon and Agnes (Kruskie) Donnelly
Religious Profession: August 15, 1942
Date of Death: May 25, 2017
Age: 93
Years Professed: 74



Wake Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Eleanore Frances Donnelly was born on December 31, 1923 in Kegomic, near Petoskey, Michigan to Leon and Agnes (Kruskie) Donnelly. She was baptized on January 12, 1924 at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Petoskey. She took the name Mary when she received the Sacrament of Confirmation there on May 30, 1934.

Eleanore was the second youngest of five children. After she completed second grade, Eleanore, her Dad and two of her sisters went to live with her Dad's parents on a small farm. Eleanore was fascinated by the two gardens that her Grandma had. One was large and a smaller one was near a sliding window off the kitchen. Her Grandma could just reach out and pick fresh vegetables for the meal she was preparing.

Eleanore had the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity for teachers in first and second grade. In the third grade, after moving to the farm, she attended a small country school. She did not do well there, so her Dad transferred her back to St. Francis Xavier School in Petoskey for the remainder of her elementary school years. Despite the five mile round-trip walk each day, she was happy and her grades improved. Sometimes the neighbors gave Eleanore and her sisters a ride.

At school Eleanore became good friends with Anna Kelbel who became known to us as Sister Andrea. One day Anna and Eleanore revealed a secret to each other. They both had decided that they would like to become Sisters. When Anna and her Mom were visiting at the Donnelly farm Mrs. Kelbel commented to Eleanore's Grandma, "Isn't it wonderful that the girls are going to the Convent?" Grandma was taken by surprise at this announcement. Eleanore had not shared this desire with any family members. When her Eighth Grade graduation was near her Dad asked Eleanor what she would like for graduation. Eleanor replied that she would like permission to go to the Convent. Dad's answer was simply, "You have it!" That was all that she needed!

In a letter to Mother Generose dated July 21, 1938 Eleanore wrote:

Dear Mother General,

I am sending my application without my dentist certificate because I would like to come the same time as Anna Kelbel because of transportation. The certificate will be sent about a week from now. I hope you will accept me to the order and I promise to obey all rules.

Yours truly, Eleanore Donnelly

Eleanore was accepted and entered the Postulancy at Holy Family Convent with her travel companion, Anna Kelbel, on August 21, 1938. At the time of her Reception on June 13, 1940, Anna received the name, Sister M. Malachy. Eleanore's sister, Kate, took marriage instruction from a Father Malachy. Eleanore didn't know him but she was very much attracted to his name which was very Irish like the Donnelly's were. Eleanore decided to ask for that name at the time of her Reception.

Sister Malachy completed her High School at Holy Family Academy receiving her Diploma in 1942. She earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Holy Family College in 1953 with a major in History and minors in English and French. Sister Malachy was a classroom teacher for about 25 years teaching Third to Seventh Graders. She appreciated and treasured the varied ministries she had in Wisconsin, Arizona, California, West Virginia, Nebraska and Hawaii. Being a catechist in Arizona for the Papago/Tohono O'odham People and the Filipino People in Hawaii was a special joy for her. She enjoyed working with the People and learned much from their traditions and cultures. They helped to form her outlook on life.

At the time of her Jubilee she wrote, "My whole life has been free of worry concerning my health and how much money I earned for my Community. I am grateful for the many opportunities to advance my spiritual life. As I reflect on my life as a Spouse of Christ I sometimes wonder, 'Why me, Lord?' God's love for me is beyond imagining!"

Sister Malachy does not have to wonder anymore about God's love for her and the invitation call to be a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. Having just celebrated her 75th Jubilee she has had opportunity to see the many blessings that have happened because of her "yes" to God.

Thank you, Sister Malachy! May you rest in peace. AMEN!