



Name: Sister Nathanael Jenks
Date of Birth: May 23, 1924
Place of Birth: Manistique, Michigan
Parents: Frank Whitney and Rose Catherine (Langley) Jenks
Religious Profession: August 15, 1946
Date of Death: December 25, 2019
Age: 95
Years Professed: 73

Wake Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Rose Mary (Marie) Jenks was born in Manistique, Michigan on May 23, 1924 to Frank Whitney and Rose Catherine (Langley) Jenks. She was Baptized at St. Francis de Sales Church on June 22, 1924 and took the name Catherine when she was Confirmed there June 21, 1936.

Rose Mary was the 6th child in the family. She had three older sisters, two older brothers and one younger brother. She attended St. Francis de Sales Grade School where the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity taught. Rose Mary graduated from Manistique High School on June 10, 1942. The Class Motto was, "If We Rest, We Rust."

After High School Rose Mary became a telephone operator and worked for Michigan Bell Telephone Company. In October 1943, Mother Perpetua, who was visiting the Sisters in Manistique, left a message that she would like to visit Rose Mary. Rose Mary thought that Mother Perpetua was going to ask her to coordinate a project with the Catholic Youth Organization for the Sisters. When Rose Mary stopped in at the Convent she was utterly surprised when Mother Perpetua said that someone had mentioned that they thought Rose Mary had a vocation. After they finished talking Rose Mary stopped at St. Francis de Sales Church to ponder and pray about that conversation. She then went home and told her Mother that she felt that she should enter the Convent. Since Rose Mary was the remaining daughter at home, her parents were reluctant to have her leave, but because her parents adopted every Sister, they ended up with a very large extended family!

Rose Mary knew that two of her girlfriends had wanted to enter the Convent since they were in Grade School, however, their parents thought that they were too young to leave home. Rose Mary informed her two friends, Ilene Hambeau and Eileen Fagan, of her decision to enter the Convent. This was the encouragement for her friends to once again ask their parents to enter

with Rose Mary. Blessings were given by the parents and the three friends arrived at Holy Family Convent on December 6 at Noon and classes began on December 7th.

The following note of recommendation, dated, November 28, 1943, came from her Pastor:

To Whom it May Concern:

This is to certify that Rose Mary Catherine Jenks is a young lady of splendid behavior and as far as I know of the best character. I heartily recommend her to your Community. Enclosed please find Baptismal and Confirmation certificate.

Sincerely,

Reverend B. J. P. Schevers

They received their Postulant Crucifix on December 8th and were received into the Novitiate on June 13, 1944. Sister St. Philip was influential in Rose Mary's vocation. Since the Apostle Philip called Nathanael to serve Christ, Nathanael was one of the names that Rose Mary submitted for Reception. Eileen Fagan received the name Sister Bernadone and Ilene Hambeau received the name, Sister St. Philip.

Sister Nathanael attended summer classes at Holy Family College and then switched to Cardinal Stritch College in Milwaukee where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1949 with a Major in Home Economics and Dietetics and a Minor in Biology and Chemistry. The following year she completed an Internship at St. Louis University Hospital to become qualified as a Registered Dietitian. This was followed by one year of invaluable, practical learning in the Motherhouse Kitchen under the direction of Sister Pelagia. Preparing to be a High School Economics Teacher, Sister Nathanael went back to St. Louis where she took sewing courses at Fontbonne College.

Recalling Sister Nathanael's High School Class Motto: "If We Rest, We Rust," it is evident that she took this inspiration to heart and lived out this motto wherever she was missioned. We know that she did not rust! Sister Nathanael served as a high school teacher, a teacher of student nurses and was Administrator of St. Paul Home and St. Francis Memorial Hospital. She supervised the food service area at Silver Lake College while it was under construction while managing the Motherhouse kitchen. Sister Nathanael served on the General Administration and was director of Temporalities. After her term ended, Sister Nathanael served her Sisters as Homemaker for 14 years. When her health began to decline she was missioned to the Motherhouse and was privileged to drive the Sisters in St. Rita Health Center to appointments and act as their Medical Companion.

Sister Nathanael enjoyed everything that was asked of her. She especially enjoyed sewing, cooking, upholstering, teasing and writing poetry. The following is a poem written on August 15, 1951, the day of her Perpetual Profession.

For the Whole Time of My Life

*A few more hours and I will be
His spouse for all eternity
In just a few short hours more,
The off'ring of my life is o'er.*

*And then this soul-no longer mine
Begins its consecration time,
How overwhelming is the thought
That Christ, my hand in marriage sought.*

*He passed two dozen classmates by
More worthy of His love than I
He placed His hand upon my brow,
"I want your love forever now."*

*Was all He whispered in my ear,
Nor did I hesitate to hear.
God grant that having given all
I will not bit by bit "recall."*

*The promises I made today
To walk forever in His way
And may I ever bear all strife
With joy, the whole time of my life.*

Sister Nathanael sometimes wondered, "If no one had asked," would she have been a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity? We do not have to wonder, for someone did ask and she heard God's call. She was faithful to the promises made at her Profession to journey in God's path with joy, the whole time of her life! We thank God for the gift of the life He gave us in Sister Nathanael and we thank her for the witness she gave to us to live as a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity.

Eternal rest grant to Sister Nathanael, O, Lord, and let Perpetual Light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. AMEN!