

Name: Sister Mary Ann McElroy (Sister William Josephine)  
Date of Birth: February 25, 1925  
Place of Birth: Waukesha, Wisconsin  
Parents: William Joseph and Josephine Elizabeth (Brehm) McElroy  
Religious Profession: August 15, 1945  
Date of Death: July 28, 2020  
Age: 95  
Years Professed: 74



Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Mary Ann McElroy was born February 25, 1925 in Waukesha, Wisconsin to William Joseph and Josephine Elizabeth (Brehm) McElroy. She was baptized at St. Joseph Church in Waukesha on March 8, 1925. Mary Ann was confirmed there on November 11, 1936. Mary Ann grew up with two brothers, William and James, whom she loved very much, however, she always prayed to have a sister.

Mary Ann attended St. Joseph Elementary School in Waukesha where she was taught by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. She and her two brothers often watched for the Sisters when they were out walking. Mary Ann seriously thought of being a Sister when she was in eighth grade. Sister Joan Therese and Sister Aimee were especially admired for their kindness and friendliness. Her parents were also very supportive of the Sisters. Her Dad would clean and shine their 1927 Buick before he drove the Sisters on requested trips. Her mother frequently spoke of how blessed any mother would be if one of her children would become a Sister or a Priest.

After completing two years at Waukesha Public High School, Mary Ann applied to enter Holy Family Convent to become a Sister. Her pastor wrote the following letter of recommendation dated August 21, 1942.

*To Whom It May Concern:*

*Mary Ann McElroy, a member of this parish, is known to me for almost seven years. She tells me she wishes to enter the Religious Life. In my humble opinion, she shows all the signs of such a vocation, is a fine Catholic, young lady and I am very happy to hear that she is entering your Community.*

*Joseph Lederer, Pastor*

Mary Ann's parents and brothers accompanied her when she entered Holy Family Convent on August 25, 1942. At the time of her Reception into the Novitiate, June 10, 1943, to the surprise of Mary Ann's Father and Mother, Mother Perpetua gave her the name, Sister William Josephine, after her parents. This is when she realized that God had answered her prayer for a sister. Actually, the generosity of God gave her LOTS of Sisters! It was at the time of Vatican Council II that Sister William Josephine returned to her baptismal name and was then known as Sister Mary Ann.

Sister William Josephine/Sister Mary Ann completed her High School and earned her Diploma from Holy Family Academy in 1944. Sister went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1958 from Holy Family College with a Major in Education and a Minor in English. Sister continued her education earning credits at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana; Western Washington State College in Bellingham, Washington; Viterbo College in La Crosse, Wisconsin and Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa.

Sister Mary Ann taught all grades during her 47 years of teaching and was Principal in Oshkosh, Reedsville and Sturgeon Bay. She was blessed with the opportunity to touch the hearts of many children and brought them closer to Jesus. Lasting friendships were developed. After being in the classroom, Sister Mary Ann was coordinator of St. Rita Health Center for four years and Local Director for the St. Rita's Sisters for six years. She loved her ministry with the Sisters in St. Rita's. The Sisters were an inspiration and a blessing for her.

When Sister Mary Ann was asked about her special talents, skills, hobbies and interests she said that she loved visiting with people. She enjoyed knitting, crocheting, craft work, playing the mandolin, piano and trumpet. She also liked to swim and go for bike rides.

Sister Mary Ann will be enjoying her August 15, 2020 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from her eternal resting place. We can only imagine the celebration in true Irish style! We can count on St. Patrick being there to honor this blessed occasion! At the time of an earlier Jubilee, Sister Mary Ann reflected:

*I thank God for answering my childhood prayer for a sister in His way, not mine. He has given me a Franciscan Community of loving Sisters whose friendship, support and inspiration have been a blessing to me. My life has been enriched spiritually, educationally and physically.*

*How grateful I am to my faith-filled parents, my brothers and their families who nurtured, encouraged, and supported me in my vocation! Many challenges as well as blessings have filled these years! How thankful I am to be chosen to be a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. Sister Mary Ann, we, your Sisters, are also grateful that you were called to be a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. Thank you for the years of witnessing selfless dedication to the service of all God's people who entered into your life.*

Sister Mary Ann became a resident of St. Rita Health Center in 2007. She has been living out her mission, participating in Christ's work of redemption through her sufferings and limitations and praying for the Sisters and Staff in St. Rita Health Center. Her earthly journey ended on Tuesday night, when God took away her earthly limitations and called her home.

Eternal life grant to Sister Mary Ann, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. AMEN!