



## SISTER MARY ALBINA RYSZ

Sister Mary Albina, Maryann Rysz slipped into eternity on February 13, 2010 at the age of 98, having been a Felician Sister for 83 years.

Maryann was the youngest of seven children born to Francis and Marciann (Kurpiel) Rysz pious Polish immigrants who settled in Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania and were members of Transfiguration Parish.

In childhood maturity, Sister Mary Albina was certain of her call to religious life. She entered the Seminary of the Felician Sisters in Detroit, Michigan in 1925 at the tender age of 14. She made her first vows in 1927 and professed final vows in 1929.

Blessed with a keen intellect and a love her Polish heritage, Sister Mary Albina pursued special studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland from 1937 until 1940. These studies were interrupted by World War II and she returned to the United States and to the ministry of teaching. Sister also studied at Villanova University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and received a B.Ed. from Duquesne University.

Sister was well-known to educators in the Pittsburgh diocese where she taught for 21 years including six years as local minister and principal at St. Mary's School, McKeesport, Pennsylvania. She also rendered services in the dioceses of Greensburg, Harrisburg and Erie.

The gifts for leadership were recognized early in her religious life. Thus Sister served as Novice Director of the Felician Novitiate in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, 1953-1959 and as Director of Formation, 1961-1971. In these roles, Sister guided the young women entrusted to her care first and foremost by her example. She was an icon of her conviction that religious life entailed self-sacrifice, self-discipline. These traits were lived in a spirit of joy and for the love of God. Letting go of the desire to gain fame, power and earthly possessions were clearly hallmarks of her life as well.

From 1959-1971, Sister Mary Albina also served as Provincial Vicar. Following that ministry, Sister accepted the appointment as local minister of St. Joseph Hall, Infirmary in 1971, serving in that capacity until 1974. Her compassion for the infirm Sisters was noteworthy. The Sisters were her first priority; however she was also a responsible steward for the physical plant. Often times Sister could be found cleaning nooks and crannies and even making order in the boiler room. The humblest work was never beneath her.

From 1974-1977, Sister was a staff member at St. Anne Home in Greensburg, Pennsylvania happily offering housekeeping services to the residents.

From 1977-1983, Sister Mary Albina was again asked to serve as Provincial Minister. She generously shared her gifts of wisdom and leadership in these roles by supporting the spiritual life of the sisters by word and example.

In retirement, Sister remained active as a portress, sacristan and translator and continued to mentor to many who sought her advice and spiritual counsel.

Sister Mary Albina was afflicted with a disorder of the esophagus that physically weakened her and eventually forced her to become bedridden. Her mind was sharp and her spirit vibrant to the very end. She longed to lay down the burden of her years and be united with her Spouse of 83 years. When the Lord came for her in the quiet of the morning hour, one would expect that these words of the psalmist were on her lips, "I waited and waited for you, O God! Now at last you have turned to me and heard my cry for help." (Ps. 40:1). Now may she rest in peace and enjoy the company of her Beloved forever.