



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sister Caroleen Baummer, SSND
Oct. 6, 1923 – Dec. 4, 2017



BALTIMORE - Sister Caroleen Baummer, SSND, died at Villa Assumpta in Baltimore on December 4, 2017. She was 94 years of age and lived the professed life of a School Sister of Notre Dame for 71 years. Sister Caroleen was an educator in music and administrator of pastoral services for 57 years in Baltimore and Harrisburg, Penn.

Marie Regina Baummer, only daughter of Sigmund and Eleanor Roth Baummer, was born in Baltimore on Oct. 6, 1923 and was baptized at St. Michael's Church on Oct. 7. Jean, as she was called, had an older brother, Charles. Sister Caroleen later described her early days in "a beautiful Catholic home" where she "learned to love music." Her mother played the piano and her father sang in the St. Michael's choir. They had a good collection of records and Jean and her father listened together to the opera on radio every Saturday afternoon.

Jean began school in September 1929 at St. Elizabeth's School where she was taught by the Sisters of St. Francis. She received her first Holy Communion at St. Elizabeth's Church in May of 1931 and was confirmed there by Bishop McNamara in June of the same year. After graduating from the eighth grade in June 1936, Jean attended high school at the Institute of Notre Dame, where she first met the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Throughout her high school years, Jean began to seriously consider her vocation. After graduation from IND in June, 1940, Jean attended the College of Notre Dame of Maryland (now university). During a retreat in junior year, Jean felt God was calling her to the religious life and she decided to answer that call. As a senior, she said, "this resolve grew and strengthened" and she applied for entrance to the candidature upon graduation.

On August 28, 1944, Jean received the bonnet in the chapel at Notre Dame of Maryland and entered the candidature. As a candidate, Jean studied education and music at the College of Notre Dame and taught piano in Notre Dame's lower school. During this year, Jean sensed a change from her "rather rational desire to carry out God's will to an ardent love for her vocation and a burning zeal for God's service." She entered the novitiate on July 16, 1945 and was given the name, Mary Caroleen, in honor of her brother. Sister Mary Caroleen professed her first vows on July 31, 1946.

Sister Caroleen's 43 years in education were always in the field of music. She taught at Notre Dame Preparatory Lower School (1946-51) and St. Ann's School, both elementary schools in Baltimore (1951-54), then St. Margaret Mary High School, Harrisburg, Pa. (1954-64) and the Institute of Notre Dame, Baltimore (1964-89). Sister Caroleen came to Villa Assumpta in 1989 as coordinator of pastoral services and later provided music and community service until she retired to prayer and presence in 2014.

Sister Caroleen's advanced education includes a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Music from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland (now university) in 1944 and a Master of Arts degree in Music Education from Catholic University, Washington D.C. in 1956.

Sister Caroleen's gift of music will continue to resound in the hearts of all who knew her. Family, friends, students, colleagues and sisters were all touched by her gift. Caroleen knew her ability and used it as she strived to help others to reach their potential. As a teacher, her students were always beautifully trained and gave excellent performances in Glee Club and musicals. Many sisters remember participating in the concert she directed at the Lyric Theater in Baltimore in the 1960s. Sister Caroleen was a perfectionist and called her students to perfection.

Gracious, gentle, with a peaceful spirit, Caroleen had a wonderful sense of humor, a great devotion to Christ and lived in God's presence.

The Christian Wake service was held on December 11 and the Mass of Christian Burial on Dec. 12. Both services were held in the chapel of Villa Assumpta. Sister Caroleen's family members contributed their talents to the music of the liturgy as did the IND Select Choir. Rev. Roman Kovacheson OFM Cap., Villa Assumpta chaplain, presided. Interment followed at Villa Maria Cemetery, Glen Arm Road, Glen Arm, Md. Sister Mary Caroleen is survived by nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Atlantic Midwest Province, c/o Development Office, 345 Belden Hill Road, Wilton, Conn. 06897 or online: www.amssnd.org

