



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sister Madeleine Chaffers, SSND

April 27, 1923 – August 19, 2017



BALTIMORE - Sister Madeleine Chaffers, SSND, died peacefully on Aug. 19, 2017 at Villa Assumpta, Baltimore. She was 94 years old and a vowed member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame for 68 years. Sister Madeleine taught for 29 years throughout Maryland, including St. Mary High School in Annapolis, and the Institute of Notre Dame and Notre Dame Prep in Baltimore.

Sister Madeleine, daughter of Dr. William and Bertha Boldue Chaffers, was born on April 27, 1923 in Lewiston, Maine. She attended public schools from kindergarten through fourth grade, and took religious instruction and French lessons from the Dominican Sisters. She received her first holy communion in the convent chapel. Madeleine completed grammar school at Saints Peter and Paul School and was confirmed at age 12 at Saints Peter and Paul Church. She attended high school at Ave Maria Academy, taught by the Dominican Sisters, in the nearby town of Sabattus. During her high school years, Madeleine began thinking of entering a teaching order of religious.

Madeleine attended Rivier College in Nashua, N.H. where she studied music. After earning a degree in music, she went to Eastman School of Music at Rochester University, Rochester, N.Y. to earn a master's degree in music. Through a friend, Madeleine found herself practicing the piano at the School Sisters of Notre Dame Convent in Rochester and became interested in the order.

Sister Madeleine received the bonnet of the School Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Joseph's Convent, Rochester and entered the candidature in Baltimore on October 15, 1947. She taught music at the Institute of Notre Dame during that year. At her reception into the novitiate on July 16, 1948, she was given the name, Madeleine Marie. Sister Madeleine Marie professed her first vows on August 3, 1949.

Sister Madeline spent her first year as a professed sister teaching music to the novices. Her next assignment was to Notre Dame Preparatory School where she taught music and French on elementary and secondary levels (1950-67). During this time, Notre Dame Prep moved from the Notre Dame of Maryland campus on Charles Street, Baltimore to the Hampton Lane campus in Towson, Md. Sister Madeline was missioned

to Bishop Walsh High School, Cumberland, Md. for music and French (1967-74). She then taught French at St. Mary's High School, Annapolis, Md. (1974-76).

In addition to classroom duties, Sister Madeleine served as organist, gave private piano and French lessons, moderated choral and glee clubs and presented volunteer programs at hospitals and nursing homes. She cared for her aging mother at her home in Lewiston, Maine. (1976-86). Sister Madeleine attended the renewal program in Chatawa, Miss. (1987). On her return to Baltimore, she made her home at the Notre Dame Prep School Convent and became an instructor in French at Berlitz Language School (1987-90). She was then employed as secretary/receptionist at the Timonium United Methodist Church, Timonium, Md. (1990-02). Sister Madeleine retired to prayer and presence in 2002, remaining at the Notre Dame Convent until moving to Villa Assumpta in 2013.

Sister Madeleine's professional degrees included a Bachelor in Music with a major in piano and a minor in organ from Rivier College in Nashua, N.H. in 1944. She received a Master in Music, majoring in piano and music literature, from Eastman School of Music at Rochester University in Rochester, N.Y. in 1947.

Sister Madeleine lived her French Canadian heritage which emphasized the Church and the family as the focal points of life. She found joy and faith in her family. Her deep faith was expressed in her favorite prayer, the French Hail Mary: "Je vous salu, Marie." She greatly loved and appreciated music. As a gifted musician, she expressed the music of her soul. Sister Madeleine was a gentle and gracious woman whose memory will be cherished by family and community.

A time for sharing memories of Sister Madeleine was held in the chapel at Villa Assumpta on Aug. 28 prior to the Memorial Mass. Her great nephew, Brad Williamson, also a pianist, played the communion reflection, Haydn's Arietta in "A." Sister's remains were interred at Villa Maria Cemetery, Glen Arm, Md. Sister Madeleine is survived by her sister, Patricia Croteau, and 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