



School Sisters
of Notre Dame
Atlantic-Midwest Province



**Sister Rita Kittel (formerly Sister Anaclete)
October 1, 1911 – September 25, 2018**

Sister Rita died on September 25, 2018, six days short of her 107th birthday. She was the oldest living member of SSND. This year she enjoyed her 85th Jubilee celebration.

Rita was born on a farm outside the village of St. Agatha, Ontario to Nicholas Kittel and Theresa (Binder) on October 1, 1911. She had five brothers and two sisters. Her parents were worried about their infant daughter because she was very sick with a high fever. When the fever left, a rash in the shape of a heart was on her chest.

Rita attended a one room country school. Since the majority of pupils were Catholic, they had a Catholic teacher. They had no formal religion classes. Instructions for First Communion were given by our sisters in St. Agatha. When Rita was 16 she had a dream in which Jesus was standing looking at her. No word was said. Then, Jesus turned and walked away. He looked back to see if she was following Him. It was then that Rita determined to become a sister.

She entered the candidature in 1927, was received as Novice Mary Anaclete in 1930 and professed in 1933.

Sister Rita taught at St. Mary's School, Kitchener, St. Louis School, Waterloo and St. Mary's School (Galt), Cambridge. In 1957 she was assigned as teacher and principal at Holy Family School, Hanover. The following year she went to St. Michael's School, Waterloo as teacher and principal until 1968. For the next three years Sister Rita taught at St. Boniface School, Maryhill. In 1971 she was principal's relief and librarian at St. Teresa School, Elmira.

In 1973 Sister Rita moved to Cloverdale, British Columbia where she set up the library, assisted with the remedial class and, later, was school secretary at Cloverdale Catholic School. To quote a few lines which the Grade 6 class wrote when she was leaving Cloverdale:

Ode to Sister Rita.

*Sister Rita seven long years have passed
Although presently you do not teach a class
Your absence from this school will be greatly felt
Because with the office you so efficiently dealt
Your duties did not end there*

*You also helped to run the School Fair
Your plants every child rushed to get
Because the prices were the lowest ever met.
Now who will organize our story and poetry contests
You treated everyone as though they were the best.
We wish you God's speed wherever you go
We'll pray for you, we want you to know.*

Sister Rita attained certificates for several Ontario Department of Education courses, including science, mathematics, art, library and religious education at both the elementary and intermediate levels. In 1980 Sister Rita attended the Credo Program at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington.

When Sister Rita moved back to Ontario in 1981, she went to Caledonia. Here she visited the elderly and served as homemaker. She was a member of the parish council and the Catholic Women's League (CWL).

In 1985 Sister Rita was asked to go to Aroland, northern Ontario. Although she was used to having a regular daily schedule, Sister Rita adjusted well to the slower pace of lifestyle. Proudly, she posed for a photo with the first fish which she caught. She eagerly participated in the ceremonies of the aboriginal community.

Sister Rita then returned to St. Louis Convent in Waterloo where she tutored English as a Second Language (ESL) students and assisted with various household tasks. She joined the CWL, Council of Churches, 55+ Club at Sacred Heart Parish, Kitchener and the local Retired Teachers' group. This was the third time she was missioned to St. Louis Convent for a total of 32 years.

In 2002 she retired to Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown. Here she continued to enjoy playing cards and bingo. She was an avid reader. In her late 90's to keep limber she would work out on exercise equipment. Until age 101, she performed a daily task in the heritage room. When asked by a former pupil her secret to a long fulfilling life, she replied, "I always say my prayers."

Mass of Christian Burial was presided by Rev. Wayne Lobsinger, Diocesan Vicar of Religious, and concelebrated by Rev. Pablito Labado, Chaplain and Rev. Michael Downey. Her funeral was attended by many nieces, nephews, friends and former students.

S. Joan Helm