



CONGREGATION OF BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION
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News Release

Sept. 2, 2008

Benedictine Sister Blanche Aubuchon Passes

CLYDE, Mo. – Sister Mary Blanche Aubuchon, OSB, 88, passed away Aug. 31, 2008, at Our Lady of Rickenbach healthcare facility in Clyde. She was a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

She was born Helen Bernice Aubuchon on Sept. 17, 1919, in Philadelphia to Cleveland and Helen Kelly Aubuchon. She was the second oldest child of five children. Her older brother, Alex, died of influenza as an infant. She had two sisters, Miriam and Joan, and a younger brother, Jerome.

The family moved often because of her father's work as an industrial investigator for the railroad. From Philadelphia, the family moved to St. Louis where Sister Mary Blanche attended Nativity Parochial School. During her childhood, the family also lived in Arkansas, Texas and in Kansas City, Mo., where she graduated from Westport High School in 1938. After high school, she did housework to help bring in income for the family.

The novel "Quo Vadis" by Henryk K. Sienkiewicz inspired her to consider religious life. She learned about the Benedictine Sisters from the Pink Sisters in St. Louis, a community also dedicated to the adoration of Christ in the Eucharist.

A few months after Sister Mary Blanche applied to enter the Congregation, a Benedictine Sister from Clyde was in St. Louis for business and stopped by the Aubuchon house to visit. She asked Sister Mary Blanche if she would like to enter, and she said yes. She accompanied the sister back to Clyde that very evening.



Sister Mary Blanche Aubuchon

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Sister Mary Blanche later wrote, "It all happened so suddenly I didn't have time to bring anything! The convent had to supply everything. How I finally came to enter at Clyde is so astounding and thrilling. Only God could, as it were, 'pull off such a stunt' with such aplomb. When I woke up that morning, I didn't know that by the evening I would be saying goodbye to my family and be on a train for Clyde."

She entered the Benedictine Sisters on June 7, 1940, and was invested in the habit Feb. 8, 1941. On Feb. 10, 1942, the Feast of St. Scholastica, she made profession and received the name Sister Mary Blanche after St. Blanche of Castile, the mother of King Louis IX, who became St. Louis.

Sister Mary Blanche worked for almost 30 years in the printery at Clyde. She faithfully ran the folder for the Congregation's booklets and its magazine, *Spirit & Life*. She also worked in the bakery, the altar bread department and in the Clyde and St. Louis infirmaries. In addition to those communities, she also lived and worked at the Congregation's monasteries in Kansas City and Tucson, Ariz.

In May 1984, Sister Mary Blanche fulfilled a dream to travel to the then-Soviet Union. Drawn to the land by its writers and poets, she visited Russia, Georgia, Siberia and Samarkand, Uzbekistan, one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world.

She was an avid birdwatcher with over 120 species on her check list and an ardent student with an adventurous spirit. Knowing that Pope Paul VI wanted Benedictine monastic men and women to enter into dialogue with the religious traditions of the East, Sister Mary Blanche often met with a Vipassana meditation group to learn about that spiritual discipline.

Sister Mary Blanche was preceded in death by her parents; brothers, Alex and Jerome Aubuchon; and a sister, Joan Bishop. She is survived by her sister, Miriam Speicher, Marietta, Ga.; sister-in-law, Trudy Aubuchon, Greensboro, N.C.; several nieces and nephews and her monastic family.

A Mass of Christian Burial will take place Thursday, Sept. 4, in the Adoration Chapel, Clyde. Memorials can be sent in care of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, 31970 State Highway P, Clyde, Mo. 64432-8100.

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