

# **SISTER CLARISSA MARIE KOSCIELSKI**

**August 12, 1920 – April 16, 2011**

Sister Clarissa Marie Koscielski of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was born in San Antonio, Texas on August 12, 1920 to Frank and Clare Koscielski. She had two brothers, Frank and Charles and two sisters, Clare and Eleanor Frances (her twin who died shortly after birth). The family moved to Los Angeles in 1928 and settled in St. Ignatius parish where the children attended St. Ignatius School, our Sister Clarissa Marie—then Eleanor—entering the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and continued on until graduation.

Eleanor then went on to enroll at Sacred Heart High School in Lincoln Heights also staffed by the Dominican Sisters. Since she was five years old, Eleanor had aspired to enter the religious life and on the advice of her mother had been daily reciting three Hail Marys for guidance in her choice. And so on September 8, 1939 she became a postulant at Mission San Jose, receiving the Dominican habit the following year on June 3. Her first profession took place on August 12, 1941, with final profession following in 1948.

Sister earned her BA in English at our Queen of the Holy Rosary College and a second BA in education from Immaculate Heart College, Hollywood. Her teaching ministry extended over 21 years in elementary schools throughout California and one year in Oregon, followed by another 21 years as guidance counselor in high schools staffed by the Dominican Sisters.

In 1991 Sister returned to the Motherhouse at Mission San Jose where she served as Prioress for St. Joseph's Community for three years. Cancer surgery intervened in 1995, and following her recovery, Sister ministered as receptionist for the next nine years. In 2005 Sister's health required an assignment to St. Martin's residence and a ministry of prayer.

In 2011 Sister Clarissa Marie was looking forward to the celebration of her Diamond Jubilee (70 years of profession) but chose to celebrate early in February with her family present. Perhaps she sensed that God would be calling her to Himself before the major Congregational celebration in May. How right she was! Her physical condition began to deteriorate during March and, following some days of weakness, Sister died at St. Martin's residence in the early hours of April 16, supported by her Sisters and the members of the nursing staff. She had previously been anointed by Father Jeff Finley, C.P.P.S., Motherhouse Chaplain, and listened to the Salve Regina sung by the community.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated and a beautiful homily preached by Father Jeff, on April 19. A number of family members, Sisters from Bay Area convents and nurses joined the Motherhouse Community in praying for our Sister.

Sister was laid to rest in God's Acre the following morning, April 20.

*--S. Mary Paul Mehegan*