

Sister M. Berenice Petrauskas, OSF

March 14, 1930- April 10, 2019



Secular Name: Janina Grazina Petrauskaite
Birth: March 14, 1930
Entrance: September 8, 1951
Parents: Norbertas and Vladislova Dakineviciute Petrauskiene
Siblings: Hedwig, Regina, Irena
Elementary School: Boarding school in Lithuania
High School: St. Francis Academy
Higher Education: Bachelor and Masters of Elementary Education from Duquesne University; Point Park College

Ministry:

*Friday's child is loving and giving...*and so began the story of Grazina Petrauskas born on March 14, 1930 in Rinkavos Dvaras, Lithuania to parents Norbertas Petrauskas and Vladislova Dakineviciute Petrauskiene. They also had daughters Hedwig, Regina and Irena. Irena died as an infant. Her mother died on Good Friday, April 23, 1943. Her father was a freedom fighter and was killed by the Russians in the summer of 1947.

Sister Berenice lived in Lithuania until October of 1944 when they fled from the Communists to Bavaria, Germany with their uncle, Father Joseph Dakinevicius. She lived in Germany until 1947 when a group of Lithuanian 'orphans' were permitted to leave for America. "I do not consider myself an orphan because our dad became a freedom fighter and he was killed by the Russians while crossing our longest river in the summer of 1947." In her autobiography, Sister Berenice tells of the horrors of war that she witnessed during those years of WWII, from burned out cities to injured animals, abandoned farms, evacuated lavish homes and demolished railroad stations by the Nazi regime in Germany.

Sister Berenice and her two sisters arrived in Bronx NY and later moved to Yonkers. They then came to Pittsburgh and attended St. Francis Academy. She entered the convent in September of 1951 being received by Sister M. Loyola. She became a teacher, worked in the Motherhouse kitchen and laundry, was a clerical aide at South Side Catholic High School and later became a clerical aide to the Administration at the Motherhouse. To quote Sister Berenice, "Prayer, work, religion and politics were my favorite topics of discussion with anyone who wanted to hear it. All I can say is 'Bless the Lord for all the good He has done for me.' I loved being a sister.

Sister Berenice, in her simplicity and her never-ending prayerfulness, lived her life with all of its suffering, by her faith in God.

The Lord is my light and my salvation... of whom shall I be afraid?