

Reflections for Wake service for Sr. Angeline Keating, OSB

Aug. 24, 2017

Mary's words: *"Be it done unto me according to your word"* were a pattern for Sr. Angeline's life.

On May 8, 1930 Virginia Elizabeth Keating was born to John and Mary Patricia Keating at Sacred Heart Hospital here in Yankton. She arrived in this world just as the evening Angelus bells were ringing celebrating Mary's "Yes" to God.

Virginia Elizabeth, lovingly called "Ginner" was the third of five children born to John and Mary Keating. She had an additional half brother and sister from her father's first marriage. Her father may have been the head of the Keating household but it seems her mother was clearly the rudder steering it. Angeline says of her mother "Although during my first 18 years I had pretended not to hear much of what my mother said, there is very little that she taught me that I have forgotten. She had a set of values hard to match." The Keating parents instilled in their children a strong faith, trust and deep love of God. They were not only faith-filled parents but also practical ones. It seems Mrs. Keating had a unique way of keeping her children busy during the summer months. She would send to camp or would send them to the movie theatre in early afternoon perhaps coming in the middle of a movie but then staying for the rerun until their mother came and called them to come home for supper. That way she knew where they were and did not need to be concerned about them. No doubt it was this experience that was the seed for Sr. Angeline's great love for good movies and for TV. Sr. Angeline's love of travel began at an early age. When only a Junior in high school Ginner and Mary Ann Binder were put on the train all by themselves going to New York on a vacation. (Neither had ridden a train before.) They had a great time and returned home safely on schedule. Sr. Angeline's later adventures took her to Europe, Egypt, Jordan, Greece and the Holy Land. All experiences she enjoyed and cherished with family, students, and/or friends.

The seed of her call to the religious life began early in life thanks to the sisters who taught her at SHS. Even in high school, whether at MMHS or the public school, that invitation from God was always present in her heart. During her senior year when it became clear to her that their basketball team would not go to the tournament and her potential date for the prom did not seem too exciting to her Ginner decided to respond to that lingering desire of her heart. She entered Sacred Heart Convent on Dec. 4, 1947 and began her novitiate the following June receiving the name, Angeline, thanks to the persistent request of Sr. Alexia, one of the nurses who helped bring her into this world as the Angelus bells were ringing. She made first profession a year later on June 24 1948.

Angeline began her teaching profession in elementary school and then taught high school students for a total of 16 yrs. Having completed her Master's degree she was asked to teach in the college. It was at that time that she started to experience options beyond the classroom which were more to her natural bent. She served as Dean of students at MMC, admissions counselor, personnel director at SHM and eventually found her niche spending many years in drug addiction counseling. That was a relatively new profession at that time so there were few

sisters in that ministry. As a result Sister enjoyed the rich experience of living with a wide variety of sisters while ministering as an addiction counselor. This too broadened her horizons and led her to see life differently.

Sr. Angeline was a forward looking person always seeking ways to change whatever she felt needed change. She analyzed everything even strategies in playing cards. She became famous for her incessant questions. It seemed any question responded to led to 5 or 6 more questions. After Vatican II she was full of ideas regarding changes in the community or church. The Vatican II experience released in her both a need to explore options and the freedom to do so. She had found her voice – a treasure she never lost again. Recently, when reflecting upon the 1960's and 70's she commented that she suspects that she was often a "burr under the saddle" of many administrators.

She was intensely interested in anything going on in the world, in the church and in community. Even in her dying days she would muster up the energy needed to ask about happenings in her family or in community. Family was very important to Sr. Angeline. Many are the times when she would drop everything to attend a last minute birthday party or anniversary celebration for a family member. She cherished the times the whole family gathered together to celebrate and enjoy each other whether she planned them or was the happy recipient of another's organization of such fun gatherings. Having the family together was so meaningful and important to her.

Suffering was a very familiar experience in Sr. Angeline's life especially these last 12-14 years. She was open and realistic about her suffering but also tremendously courageous, patient and positive. Even though she was able to share with us some of what was happening in her frail body she never made us "victims" of that suffering. Her wonderful sense of humor and joyful spirit carried her through years of physical discomfort and even agony and enable her to rise above personal experience of anguish to a selfless response to others. She found ways of being for others which took her out of herself and brought joy to others.

Angeline revealed by her life a deep love and concern for those on the fringes of society or victims of circumstances beyond their control. Like Mary she could exalt in the way God "lifts up the lowly" and rejoice when she was His instrument in making that happen.

Virginia Keating came into this world as the Angelus bells were ringing announcing Mary's "Yes" to God and left this world on the feast of the Queenship of Mary. Like Mary, the Mother of God, her life was a continual "Yes" to God. May she too now be celebrating the fruits of eternal joy and peace!

Angeline, you leave us with many cherished memories. We will miss you but we rejoice in the victory that is yours.

Reflections by Sr. Doris Oberembt, OSB