

In Sr. Grace's autobiography, she tells us what was important in her life, what she wanted us to understand about her, and what she hoped to inspire in us as we continue to live out the Benedictine way of life. "I hope I can keep on trying to help others, ministering to the sick. I hope to be helpful to others as long as I can. I am very grateful for all the opportunities I have had during these many years. I look forward to whatever God still has in store for me. I am looking forward to meeting my family after I die."

More than once in her autobiography she mentions her gratitude to her kind, generous, and good-hearted relatives. If it were up to Grace, she would put all her relatives in heaven. As she said "I am looking forward to meeting my family after I die. Hopefully we will all meet in Heaven someday, please God. It will be so good to talk to them again."

Sr. Grace was born on July 4, 1925, and she was proud to have her birthday on that holiday. She grew up on a farm not far from Crofton. The family was hard-working, yet fun-loving. She was the 16th of 17 children. They attended school at Beaver Creek, NE about 3 miles from home. She loved her teachers and often remarked how good they were. After grade school, she attended Mt Marty High School and entered Sacred Heart Monastery. One of her favorite stories that happened soon after entering the community was her being sent to work in the monastery candy kitchen. She went off cheerfully and discovered that it was really the 'canning' kitchen. After college, done mostly by taking courses in the summer, she began a teaching career for the next 34 years, teaching in South Dakota, Nebraska, and North Dakota.

One of the most difficult times for her was her 5 years in Richardton, ND where the nuns were not allowed to wear the religious garb in the classroom. This was hard for her, but she realized later that the work there made a difference to the Catholics in that area. She knew in her heart that their work in ND did much for the people of God there in spite of that law. All through her life when she encountered difficulties and challenges in her work, she knew that it was helpful for her to see the good and accept that as part of God's plan for her.

She left teaching in the late 1970's and worked in the dietary department at Sacred Heart Hospital. She also visited patients, taking communion to them. Later she volunteered at the Benedictine Center as a receptionist where she enjoyed meeting the public. While working there, her energy and sense of mission extended into the various foundations and causes to raise money for needs at the hospital. Often she was "best in sales". How well we remember her salesmanship when the hospital was selling roses, or tickets for the summer ice cream social, or tickets for the Oktoberfest. She was not at all bashful about cornering people and convincing them of the value of what she was doing.

Gratitude and a strong sense of mission were consistent elements in her approach to all of life. She knew well what helped and shaped her: her family and friends whom she respected and loved, the daily chores to be done on the family farm, the natural beauty she felt everyday on the land, the education she experienced, the daily living in the monastery among her sisters, her strict but kind teachers, the loyalty and kindness experienced in life-long friendships, the travels she was able to do. She was grateful that all of these were a part of her life as they made her stronger, more able to take on challenging tasks.

She admits that new challenges made her fearful, but from all the new adventures she had, each time she realized that her life was stretched and that the world was a more beautiful place to be and to explore. The last words in her autobiography were a final reminder to us of what she valued so intensely in life. She wrote "a special thanks to my Benedictine family for sharing all of these years with me. I also want to thank my many nieces and nephews and relatives who were so thoughtful of me. May god bless us all.