

Remembering Carol Favor, IHM

March 3, 1934 – Oct. 22, 2014



Born at home to Elmer and Elsie (Boes) Favor, weighing only two pounds, with her mother dying two weeks later, Carol Favor was surprised that she survived, but God gave her four score years of life. In her Book of Life page, Carol testifies, "I can truly say the Lord has looked down upon me with favor." She drew inspiration from those references in Scripture to the "favor" of the Lord.

These 80-favored years, Carol lived generously with little fanfare in the service of others. Encouraged by her friends to write a biography, she left behind on her computer a brief, incomplete account, eight sentences long, titled "My Life."

The last sentence brought the reader just about to the third grade. She wrote, "Went to St. Joseph School in Maybee; 3 rooms [sic] and three classes to a room for 2 years."

When Carol moved to a new school, the teacher said to her, "Tell me. Where did you go to school before this?" Carol replied, "Maybee." "Pardon me," said the teacher. I asked you where you went to school." "Maybee" said Carol. "Stop being so sassy. I need to know where you came from." Carol enjoyed telling that story.

Our search for the details of the life of this unpretentious woman revealed another amazing Sister, Servant of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a woman of faith and courage, realizing her baptismal call quietly and firmly.

At birth, Carol had two sisters, Madonna, age 2, and Margaret, 11 months. Three years later, in 1937, her father married Imelda Franzen. About Imelda, Carol wrote, "Then God sent a beautiful woman to be our mother, and then our family increased to six girls and four boys. We had a great childhood growing up together." David, James, Lenny, Laurie, Dianne, Gaile Marie and Mark with Madonna and Margaret comprised what was probably a very lively tribe of siblings. Carol treasured them: joining in on summer gatherings and family events.

In her Book of Life entry, Carol noted, "My father was a Christian brother for some time so I feel he passed his vocation on to me." In 1952, after graduation from Holy Redeemer High School, she was led to realize that call here in Monroe. Following her time as a Postulant, on May 31, 1953, Carol entered the IHM Novitiate and received the religious name Laurietta.

Her father was pleased with her decision, but her mother initially worried about the tough choice Sister Carol was making for her life. Her brothers and sisters missed her. "They would bring a suitcase every time they came to see me, hoping I would come home. Eventually, they left it home." (C.C. Bennett biography, *2013 Jubilarians*, p. 5)

Her first 10 years as an IHM proved to be an intimate insertion into community life as she served in the infirmary and community diet kitchens. Of those years, Claudia Cassidy Bennett, writing Carol's biography for her 60-year Jubilee wrote, "She enjoyed the older sisters and hearing stories of their formative years in the community." Carol summed it up, "It was a blessing to know all those dear, dear sisters. I have been blessed knowing the community like I do."

But, still, it was only the beginning. Carol, wanting to join her IHM classmates in teaching, earned her master's degree at Wayne State University in elementary education and began a 35-year teaching ministry at St. Timothy, Trenton; St. Bede, Southfield; St. Rene, Chicago; St. Mary Parish School, Monroe; and, finally, her own alma mater, Holy Redeemer, Detroit. She tutored the slower ones, even home schooled some children, fed needy children and invented helpful ways for classroom learning. Carol became a seasoned, sensitive, successful teacher.

A good cook and a fine seamstress, she moved from the convent into the Redeemer neighborhood building friendships with the people. Becoming a hostess for an interdenomi-national prayer support group gave her pleasure. She loved to cook. In addition, friends and neighbors enjoyed her needlework gifts and profited by her tailoring skills. By 1991, her prayer group gathered monthly for a potluck. By 1995, they met every two weeks. Thus Carol became part of the local community, identifying with their needs.

It was no surprise then that in her retirement, not only did she continue as a substitute teacher at Holy Redeemer, but Carol remained in the neighborhood. She became active with the Southwest Community Policing program and did filing and phone work for the Southwest Business Association on West Vernor Highway. She spent hours on the phone working for clean streets, for keeping streetlights working and streets safe. Serving as liaison between the police and residents, she was another IHM voice realizing our shared commitment to Detroit. Police, business owners and residents acknowledged the effectiveness of her listening ear and active support, honoring her with various awards. In recent years, she served as a treasurer in the Pablo Davis Elderly Living Center, where she lived with her beloved cat Missy, a welcome companion given to her by Sister Margaret Hughes.

With her health declining and hearing the advice of her friends, Carol reluctantly began to consider retiring to the Motherhouse. She knew the dangers as well as the joys of her

living situation. Last year, when a resident murdered two residents at Pablo Davis, Carol remained. “My heart’s in Detroit. I’ve always loved Detroit,” she told Claudia Bennett.

And so God honored her desire to live out her days in a city so in need of supporters; Sister Carol was found last Wednesday, Oct. 22, resting peacefully in her recliner in her apartment. “It’s a nice image,” Sister Gretchen Webb reported to her Magnificat Mission Unit members, “to think that she was sleeping at home and when she woke up she was in the hands of her loving God!” Surely, she took with her all those concerns that moved her through life – her family, her IHM community, the City of Detroit, the poor and needy and children in need of education.

We have another advocate in you, Carol. With your inspiration and support, we echo the verse you often read in your room upon rising, “Forever is hard to imagine, the future may seem far away—but every new dawn brings a wonderful chance to do what you can, day by day.”

Indeed, you have done what you could! Surely you can exclaim with St. Paul, “But by God’s favor I am what I am. This favor of his has not proved fruitless to me” (1 Cor. 15:10). With gratitude and blessing, we accompany you to eternal joy.

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