

April 17

Sister Katherine Hart  
(Sister Marie Grace Hart)  
1906-1981

Katherine Elizabeth Hart, later to be known as Sister Marie Grace was born on October 10, 1906 in Watertown, New York.

Her father, William Hart, was of Irish descent and her mother, Grace Johnston Hart, was of Irish and Dutch background. Both parents were born in Kingston, Ontario. They had two daughters, Katherine and Edith (Hart) Rychman. The girls were close in age and great companions for one another. In early childhood, death deprived them of their father. Mrs. Hart after some years re-married. "Stim", the stepfather, was very good to the mother and the girls.

Shortly after the death of Mr. Hart, the mother took instructions and was baptized a Catholic. Mrs. Hart took her promise to rear the girls in the Catholic Faith most seriously. The girls attended St. Michael's School in Flint and also St. Joseph Academy in Nazareth, Michigan. The latter was a boarding school.

Katherine was a most refined and gentle lady. Along with her pleasant personality, she possessed a good sense of humor. Her gracious manner endeared her to all who knew her.

Contact with the I.H.M. sisters from St. Michael's School confirmed her great desire to become a Sister dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Under the influence and guidance of Sister Luella Farrell, Katherine made the decision to enter the convent in Monroe.

June 24, 1924 marked the date of her entrance into the Postulate. Katherine received the habit and the name Sister Marie Grace on January 2, 1925. After the completion of two years of novitiate, she pronounced Temporary Vows on December 30, 1926 and Final Vows on January 2, 1930.

A Normal Life Certificate was granted August 31, 1929, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree was later earned from Marygrove College. She began her teaching career at St. Mary Academy in 1925.

Sister Marie Grace was a devoted and dedicated teacher. Her sincere desire to give herself completely over-flowed into a full life of service in the following schools:

St. Cecilia, Detroit	1926
St. Gregory, Detroit	1927-29
Sacred Heart, Dearborn	1930
Blessed Sacrament, Detroit	1931-34
St. Mary of Redford	1935-36
St. Mary, Lorain, Ohio	1937-39
St. John, Benton Harbor	1940-45
St. Felicitas, Chicago	1946-47
St. Agnes, Detroit	1948-53
St. Raymond, Detroit	1953-57
St. Bede, Birmingham	1957-63
Mother of Our Savior, Redford	1963-64
St. Mary of Redford	1964-71
Motherhouse - Retirement	1971-79
Infirmery - Patient	1979-80

St. Bede's School in Birmingham opened in the Fall of 1957. Sister Marie Grace was named superior and principal of the new convent and school. Being of a very quiet and retiring nature, she had much to contend with during those beginning days. The Pastor had his ideas that were not always in conformity with those of I.H.M. standards. Sister Marie Grace bore those hardships with great resignation and tried in every way to ease the trials for the young Sisters who were assigned to her mission.

Never did any of her friends hear her utter any unkind words or complaints about the pioneer years at St. Bede's. One of the greatest deprivations was the lack of a chapel in the new convent when it was erected during her term. The Sisters were obliged to go to the Church for their spiritual exercises.

Besides her role as principal and superior, she also served as assistant

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superior and principal for a number of years. Her other ministries included sodality moderator, instruction of altar boys, care of the chapel and various other convent and school responsibilities.

For many years Sister's mother was confined to a Nursing Home and was out of touch with reality. This was a great cross for Sister and she never spared herself in doing all that she could for her dear mother. During those years she was stationed in the Redford area, to make it possible for her to visit her mother easily.

As her name connotes, Sister Marie Grace was always most gracious and kind. She won the hearts and confidence of all who came under her influence.

Retirement came in 1971 when she too began to experience failing health and the loss of memory. For approximately six years Sister lived in Triple A Corridor of the Academy. The Sisters there were very good to her and she was happy with them and her pet parakeet. As her illness became more grave, Sister was confined to Infirmary III. During those months, weeks, and days she shared her agony with Jesus.

The everlasting call and response came on Good Friday, April 17, 1981. Her death might well be likened to Jacob's awakening after his dream at Bethel . . . a coming Home after a long helpless meander to arrive finally at eternal peace and the REALITY of God's Presence Forever!

At the time of Sister Marie Grace's death, she was survived by a sister, Mrs. Edith (Hart) Ryckman; Sister Mary Immaculate Heart, OSU, and Sister Vera Kelly, IHM - cousins.