

Sister Mary Brendan Block, C.PP.S.

Born: July 28, 1918

Professed: August 10, 1939

Entered into Life: May 3, 2020

Verse on her memorial card:

**“It was not you who chose Me, But I who chose you
and appointed you to go, and bear fruit that remain.”
John 15:16**



May 4, 2020

Dear Sisters,

Shortly before 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 3, 2020, the Good Shepherd called our Sister Mary Brendan Block home. She who prepared hundreds of children to receive their First Eucharist, often on one of the Sundays of May, was given the gift of full communion with God.

Born on July 28, 1918, Sister Mary Brendan was the third of thirteen children of Henry and Regina (Heidemann) Block. Baptized two days later at St. Andrew Parish in St. Louis, she was given her mother's name, Regina.

Sister Mary Brendan entered our novitiate on July 25, 1937 and professed first vows on August 10, 1939. She celebrated the 80th anniversary of her profession in 2019. She completed a bachelor's degree in English and Religion at Quincy College.

From an early age, Regina Block wanted to be a sister. When she was in second grade, she would put a dish towel on her head and pretend it was her veil. "That's a good way to get out of doing dishes, isn't it?" she laughed. She admired the sisters who were her teachers and wanted to follow in their footsteps. She, in turn, inspired others. Sister Ellen Orf credits Sister Mary Brendan, her teacher in Grades 1-4, with her own desire to be a Sister and a teacher.

Sister Mary Brendan taught primary grades for fifty-five years. Fifty-two of these years were spent at Missouri schools: Immaculate Conception, Dardenne; public school, Millwood; St. Anthony of Padua, Folk; St. Joseph, Josephville; St. Clement of Rome, St. Louis; Sts. Phillip and James, River aux Vases; Our Lady Help of Christians, Weingarten; St. Joseph, Rhineland; Holy Rosary, Warrenton; All Saints, St. Peters; Sacred Heart, Ozora; St. John the Baptist, Gildehaus; Assumption, New Haven; and, St. Paul School in St. Paul. She taught for three years at Sacred Heart School in Wynot, NE and for three months at St. Rose of Lima in Murfreesboro, TN.

Sister Mary Brendan loved teaching the little ones. In a 1980 interview with the *New Haven Leader* she said, “It is so gratifying to see them come to school without being able to read, and when the end of the year comes, you see them with books. . .their progress is so visible.” In that same interview she remarked, “What I especially love about the children is their simplicity—their love for truth; and they are so open and sincere toward the beautiful.”

In a letter to the St. Louis Archdiocesan School Office, Monsignor Bernard Boessen, then pastor of St. Paul Parish, described Sister Mary Brendan as “a tremendously gifted person; a dedicated and outstanding teacher; a worthy representation of the image and traditional concept of an espoused religious.”

After retiring from the classroom, she did crafts, needlework and many volunteer tasks in O’Fallon. Since 2012 she has been ministering in prayer and presence at St. Joseph Retirement Center, now Abbey Senior Health.

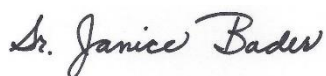
While her greatest joy in teaching was preparing the children for First Penance and First Eucharist, she also loved to direct the children in plays. She carried this love of performance with her into her retirement years. Each spring or summer she would cajole often reluctant Sisters from skilled care to join her in performing a play for the entire community. These plays provided many intended (and sometimes unintended) laughs, and they were a source of pride and joy for Sister Mary Brendan.

Sister Mary Brendan was preceded in death by her parents and by her brothers Henry, Aloys, Anthony, Joseph, Alex, Leo, Norbert, and Gerald. She was also preceded in death by her and our Sister Hildegard and by her sister, Margaret. She is survived by her brothers, Vincent and Raymond, a sister-in-law, Pat (Jackson) Block, and by nieces and nephews of several generations. Let us hold them all in prayer.

Because of the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be a private burial ceremony and a Memorial Mass later.

Sister Mary Brendan chose John 15:16 as the verse for her memorial card, “It was not you who chose Me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.” Surely her life of nearly 102 years has borne much fruit. On her 101st birthday, Sister Mary Brendan was asked to share her secrets for living a long life. In a strong voice, she responded, “Pray and keep in contact with young people.” Let us join in giving thanks for her life and for the many young people that she inspired to “go and bear fruit.”

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Janice Bader". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Sr. Janice Bader