

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

St. Paul Province



Genealogy Request

Family Name Mc Avoin, Catherine Agnes
Sister Name (if applicable) Sister Fortunata
Birth Date/Place 1-14-1898 Kelly's Cross, P.E.I., Canada
Reception into Novitiate 12-27-1915
First Vows 12-27-1917 Final Vows 12-27-1920
Date/Place of Death 5-6-1990 Bethany Convent, St. Paul, Mn.
Date/Place of Interment 5-9-1990 Resurrection, St. Paul, Mn.
Education B.A.

Ministry Elementary teacher

Mother's Maiden Name Mary Ann Mc Kenna
Birth Date/Place ? P.E.I., Canada
Father's Name Joseph Mc Avoin
Birth Date/Place ? P.E.I., Canada

Other Notes

SISTERS
OF
St. JOSEPH

OF CARONDELET / 1884 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105 (612) 690-7000

Sister Fortunata McAvinn
1898-1990

This is the day God has made. It is wonderful to see and fills us with great joy.
Psalm 117

Sister Fortunata (Catherine) McAvinn waited a long time to die. Some of those days were filled with pain; other days were filled with waiting and the quiet prayer that was characteristic of her life. It is wonderful for us to know that she now rests in great joy.

Born in 1898, at Kelly's Cross, Prince Edward Island, Catherine left home when she was seventeen to follow her sister Josephine (Sister Aniceta) who had joined the Sisters of St. Joseph in St. Paul three years earlier. Completing her high school education at Derham Hall, St. Paul, Sister Fortunata began a ministry in elementary education that spanned a half century in the Twin City area. Her reputation as a fine teacher accompanied her; she was insistent, thorough and always respectful of her students. Especially strong in English, Sister Fortunata frequently sent her upper grade students home with an assignment of twenty sentences to be diagramed by the following morning. "It was almost a hobby," said former student Sister Mary Lou Murray, "like doing crossword puzzles." After school noon lunches, Sister Fortunata often gathered neglected apples and oranges, polished them up, and delivered or sent them on to families in need.

Despite her "official" retirement from classroom teaching in 1967, Sister Fortunata continued to be involved in school activities. Assigned that year to Good Shepherd, Golden Valley, Sister Fortunata tutored students, helped out in the school office, began an active telephone ministry in the parish and prepared evening meals for the sisters living in the convent. She was loved by many simply because she took time to prepare and serve a cup of tea or a glass of milk with a chocolate chip cookie. Her manner of speech, ever kind and gentle, ironed out many a wrinkle; always gracious and interested in others, people found a warm, comforting presence in Sister Fortunata.

In 1982, Sister Fortunata retired to Bethany where she enjoyed her sister's companionship until her death in 1987. The following year, Sister Fortunata celebrated her ninetieth birthday with the pleasant company of her friends from Good Shepherd who joined her for ice cream and cake. The last two years of her life brought declining changes in her health. She continued to accept life as she had for ninety years: quietly, patiently, looking forward to resting in peace and joy.