

Sister Regis LePine, CSA

Sister Regis (Genevieve Mary) LePine, CSA, 95, died on Thursday, October 21, 2010, in Nazareth Center where she resided.

At 11:00 on New Year's Eve, 1914, a little girl was born to Margaret and Joseph LePine in the little town of Coleman, Wisconsin. She gave her first cry only after her father pulled away a flap of skin covering her nose. Named Genevieve Mary, the baby was one of sixteen children, eight boys and eight girls, born into the LePine household. Three of the girls and one boy died as infants or toddlers. In 1916 the family moved to Two Rivers, Wisconsin. As a child, Genevieve's heart was captured by two things: music and the Catholic faith that permeated her family. She remembers making up little piano pieces before she was five years old. Praying the rosary was an indelible memory as was her experience of the Sisters of St. Agnes, who staffed the parish school. She once wrote about the Sisters that she thought they came from heaven. "The day I realized I could become one, this was a continued desire," she said.



Though she wanted to enter the convent after 8th grade, little Genevieve was sent to St. Mary's Springs Academy to grow and begin her high school studies. It was there that her training as a musician began in earnest when one of the Sisters began teaching her piano. On August 28, 1932, Genevieve was admitted to the Convent and professed her first vows as Sister Regis in 1935. Sister's musical training included piano, voice, and organ from the Sisters, courses from Oshkosh State Teachers College and a BS degree in Music Education from Alverno in Milwaukee, completed in 1956. In subsequent years, Sister Regis took further music training from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and from Silver Lake College in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

Next to her faith and her religious vocation, music was the love of Sister Regis' life. She shared that love for almost sixty years with students in New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Sister Regis treasured a letter from one of those students, who wrote to Sister in 1998 to tell her that she was instrumental in his ministry of liturgical music. The letter was inspired by a gathering at which he named five people attending who had all been inspired in their love of church music by their teacher, Sister Regis. He wrote, "I could not believe that a single woman could influence so many to be so dedicated to making beautiful music for the Lord."

Sister Regis continued to make beautiful music for the Lord even when she retired to Nazareth Heights and then moved to Nazareth Court and Center. She took her turn helping with liturgy and playing the organ for Masses. Long after her memory failed her, she could be heard playing favorite pieces on the piano. Once she even delighted in trying her hand at playing a harp. After several years of suffering, Sister Regis surely was happy to join the heavenly choir when the Divine Conductor invited her home early last Thursday morning.

Sister Regis is survived by 31 nieces and nephews, and numerous grand, great grand and great great grand nieces and nephews; and the Sisters of St. Agnes with whom she lived, prayed, and ministered.

Preceding her in death are her parents, Joseph and Margaret Dupuis LePine; eight brothers: Louis, Clifford, infant Alexander, Francis, Isidore, Edward, Reverend Clement, and Eugene; and seven sisters: Octavia Laque, Emily Balthazor, Laura Koch, Georgiana Rank, two-year-old Florence and infants Delores and Georgiana.

Visitation: Visitation for Sister Regis will be held on Monday, October 25, from 3:00 to 6:15 p.m. at Nazareth Court and Center, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac. A prayer service will be held at 4:00 p.m.

Services: A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Monday, October 25, 2010, at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street, Fond du Lac. Father Ken Smits, OFM.Cap. will preside. Burial will be at St. Joseph Springs Cemetery on Tuesday morning.

Memorials may be directed to the Sisters of St. Agnes Development Office, 320 County Road K, Fond du Lac, WI 54937.

The Sisters of St. Agnes are grateful to the nurses and staff of Nazareth Court and Center for their care of Sister Regis in her retirement years and to the staff of Hospice Hope for their support in these last weeks.