



Sister Evelyn Antoine, OP

Born to earthly life: February 27, 1930
Religious profession: August 15, 1951
Entered eternal life: June 23, 2016

"Breathe on me, breath of God."

song by Evelyn Brokish, OSF

“EVELYN IS HOME NOW AND BREATHING THE BREATH OF GOD,” S. Jean Ackerman reflected after Sister Evelyn Antoine’s long struggle to breathe finally ceased. Congestive heart failure caused her increasing discomfort over the past few years, but her spirit remained strong.

“She showed the patience of a saint,” S. Carol Runde, S. Evelyn’s power of attorney, said. “She never complained, even when it was hard for her to breathe.”

Evelyn Margaret, born at the family farm near of Belgium, Wisconsin, on February 27, 1930, was the sixth and last child of Clara and Edward Antoine. Her ancestors were among the first settlers in the region. Evelyn’s father died when she was just six years old, and the family had to work together in the Depression years to earn a living and care for one another.

“My mother was a woman of deep faith and prayer,” S. Evelyn recalled. Her spirituality helped the family through difficult times and influenced her children, including little Evelyn. “Prayer was important to me and I wanted to make the world a better place,” she said. “Becoming a religious sister seemed to be the best way of doing this.”

Upon graduating from high school, Evelyn joined the Racine Dominicans and at her reception was given the name Sister Claretta. In the 1960s, she returned to her baptismal name, becoming Sister Evelyn.

She taught various grades in elementary schools around Wisconsin and Michigan for several years, also serving as principal on some missions. As the Vatican II Council invited laity into expanded parish involvement and leadership, S. Evelyn eagerly accepted. Known for her determination and willingness to enter uncharted territory, she completed a second master’s degree, this time in Pastoral Studies in Ecclesial Ministry at Loyola University In New Orleans.

As a pastoral associate, S. Evelyn initiated new ministries, such as grief- and faith-sharing groups, senior companion programs, social outreach and justice ministries. She also taught religious education classes to both children and adults. Through teaching and pastoral ministry, she served in all five diocese of Wisconsin. Special to her was directing “the RCIA program and serving as an advocate of annulments for the Diocese of Green Bay.” She worked tirelessly to help people through the annulment process which sometimes led to great “spiritual friendships.”

After moving to Siena Center in 2007, S. Evelyn continued to expand her ministerial experience. “I am getting involved in study and action on important issues that need to be addressed in our world today, such as immigration, conservation and protection of our water, etc.” she wrote. She visited women at Ellsworth Correctional Institute regularly “to pray, talk about the Sunday Scripture, and give them the opportunity to receive Eucharist.”

S. Evelyn appreciated the time retirement gave her to pray. “This is very important in my life,” she said. Which was why she became a sister in the first place. The young woman who “wanted to make the world a better place” certainly did so by impacting many people in many areas in many ways. And we are grateful she can now freely breathe the Breath of God.