



70<sup>th</sup> Jubilee, 2014

**Sister Marie (M. Bartholomew) Burnaby, OP**  
**Born to earthly life: November 21, 1923**  
**Religious profession: August 4, 1944**  
**Entered eternal life: March 7, 2016**

*You are precious in my eyes,  
and I love you.*

*Is. 43:4*

Born on November 21, 1923, and baptized at Saint Charles Borromeo Parish in Detroit, Michigan, Marie Dorothy was the second child born to John and Grace Maddelein Burnaby, following her sister Madeline by two years. Her father left the family before Marie was of school age, and she moved with her mother and sister to live with her grandmother and aunt. His absence saddened her, but she was always grateful for having grown up in a family of five women where “there was lots of love and security.”

Marie attended Detroit’s Assumption Grotto School and appreciated her Racine Dominican teachers there, inspired especially by her seventh and eighth grade teachers, who “knew so much.” When told that “everyone should have a hero, but a hero can be a composite of qualities you see in different people,” she marveled at the concept. She thought, “You’re my hero; I want to be like you; but that would mean I have to be a sister.” She quickly decided it wouldn’t work, but then reconsidered, thinking it might be OK to be a sister after all. The internal debate, however, continued to go back and forth into her high school years.

For two years after graduating from high school, she worked as a secretary for Detroit lawyers (earning \$5 a week!), before finding her way to Saint Catherine’s Convent in Racine on September 6, 1941. In honor of her eighth grade teacher, Sister Bartholomew Maier (d. July 5, 1938), who was “very special, very kind,” Marie requested that name when she was received into the novitiate on August 4 of the following year, becoming Sister M. Bartholomew of the Child Jesus.



**Reception Day, 1942**  
**Marie is third from left**



About 1945

She pronounced her first vows on August 4, 1944, and her final vows on August 15, 1950.

Once professed, Sister Bartholomew continued her education during summer vacations, earning her baccalaureate degree in education in 1960 from Marquette University in Milwaukee. A master's degree in education, business, and guidance from the University of Detroit followed in 1966.

For the next fifty-plus years she would serve as teacher, counselor to students and their families, tutor, and director of the Racine Dominican Associate Program, fully devoting herself to each role, ministering to people with the compassion, care, and joy for which she would be so well-known and loved.

She began her ministry in the second year of her novitiate, at Saint Mary's in Racine, where she would teach until 1946, when she was transferred to Saint Benedict the Moor School in Milwaukee. Two years later she moved into a five-year assignment at Saint Catherine's High School in Racine. That was followed by several more secondary-school appointments: 1953 to 1954 at Saint Clement's in Center Line, Michigan; 1954 to 1955 at Saint Luke's in Plain, Wisconsin; 1955 to 1958 at Saint Mary's in Kenosha, Wisconsin; 1958 to 1961 at Nativity in Detroit, Michigan; 1961 to 1962 at Saint John's in Little Chute, Wisconsin. She began the 1962 term back at Saint Catherine's, but the following January was transferred once more to



1952

Nativity, where she spent another year and a half. In

the fall of 1968 she was back at Saint Catherine's. At that time, in line with a new option given by the congregation's chapter, she resumed her baptismal name, Marie — though at Saint Catherine's she had come to be affectionately known as "Black Bart." It was said that she was the only teacher who could give demerits with a smile!

Marie thoroughly enjoyed teaching and serving as guidance counselor to high



At St. Catherine's High School, about 1962

school students, but she was beginning to sense that it was “too late” for her to be truly effective in counseling them.

The early 1970s brought many other changes in Racine Dominican policies, among them, that sisters were now free to discern and pursue their own ministerial and community living choices. So in 1973, Marie accepted a teaching position at Lake Michigan Catholic Secondary School in Saint Joseph, Michigan, and then, in 1977, a post at Saint Mary’s Parish in Paw Paw, Michigan.

Her sights were by now set beyond just teaching, and in 1978 she joined Sister Grace Marie Kraft at Boysville, a residence and school in Clinton, Michigan, for Catholic boys with serious home problems. “Much of the tension in troubled families stems from improper methods of communication,” she noted. When communication within the family improves, the boys and their families often achieve “surprising success.... Many times they force us into great admiration of them for the humble and truthful spirit they show as we work together.” She and Grace Marie were soon joined in Boysville by Sister Rita E. Martin, and the three of them ministered there until the end of 1981, at which point Marie moved back to Detroit, this time to Saint Therese/Visitation Parish, where she served until late 1983. (Rita would continue to minister for a time in the Clinton area;

Grace Marie would stay on at Boysville until 1983.)



**Marie with a few of her students in Memphis, 1984**

Marie’s next major move was to Memphis, Tennessee, where she became a “house parent” at Porter-Leath Children’s Center. Then, in 1984, she became school/family counselor in the Memphis Catholic Schools Office. A year later she was engaged by Saint Paul’s Elementary School in Memphis.

At some point in 1987, her mother came to be in need of care, and in November of that year Marie moved to Cadillac,



**Golden Jubilee, 1994**

Michigan, to assume the role of full-time care-giver. After her mother's death late that same year, she was asked to come back to Racine to serve as director of the congregation's Associate Program, a post she would fill until 1992.



**Tutoring, about 2010**

By this time, she was sixty-nine years old, and began to shift gears for more part-time ministries. For about a year she tutored at Bethune Reading Academy in Milwaukee, and then committed herself to various other volunteer outreach programs in that city. In 1995 she moved to Siena Center, where she served in the Adult Learning Program for as long as she was able.

As her energies diminished and the building of Siena on the Lake began, Marie could be found day after day “supervising” from her

wheelchair at the windows of the north chapel corridor.

In February of 2016 she moved to Lakeshore Manor so that she could receive the skilled nursing care she now needed. On March 7, it seemed clear that her life was ebbing. Sisters Marietta Bertelsen and Alice Rademacher sat with her much of that morning, and then Sister Cyril Marie until almost noon. About fifteen sisters from Siena Center came to bless her and sing the *Salve*. Sister Rosalie Lauer and Marie's nurse Annemarie were with her when she peacefully slept away shortly after noon. She was ninety-two years old and had been professed for seventy-two years.

Marie was survived by three classmates: Sisters Agnes Ballweg, Rita E. Martin, and Valerie Zielinski.

Her funeral liturgy was celebrated at Siena Center on Thursday, March 10, 2016, with Sister Kathy Slesar as homilist. Her cremains were interred in the community plot at Holy Cross Cemetery in Caledonia.

At her Remembering Service and at dinner that day, family members, sisters, associates, former students, and friends spoke warmly of the precious gifts of this gentle woman. Several times she had hosted family reunions at Windhover, and her niece Janet recalled Marie's quick wit and shrewd remarks. She was, Janet said, “a youngster at heart” with a “little-girl naiveté.” Indeed she was!