

Durbin, Sr Elizabeth Ann (Thelma) 1929 - 2016



Kentucky Enquirer – December 29, 2016

Sr. Elizabeth Anne Durbin, CDP died peacefully on December 27, 2016. She was a professed member of the Congregation of Divine Providence for 68 years. Born in Pryse, Lee County, Kentucky in 1929 to Pius and Effie Durbin, she made her first profession of vows in 1948 and professed her final vows in 1953. Sr. Elizabeth Anne began her lifelong ministry of food service and pastoral care in 1948 at Theological College in Washington DC where she served for twenty one years; then at the Diocese of Covington Chancery for thirty-four years. She retired to Holy Family Home in 2003, where she devoted herself to the sisters there and spent more time in prayer and reflection. She will be missed by her religious community, the Sisters of Divine Providence, her sisters Sr. Francis Anne, CDP, Clara Chmiel, Mary Webb and Carolyn Asay and her brother Pius as well as her nephews and nieces. Her sisters Sarah and Virginia and her brothers Francis Leo and Amos preceded her in death. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated in Immaculate Conception Chapel, Melbourne on Thursday, December 29 at 4:00. Wake and Visitation will be at 3:00 with burial in convent cemetery following Mass. Memorials to the Congregation of Divine Providence, 5300 Saint Anne Drive, Melbourne, KY 41059. Dobbling Muehlenkamp-Erschell Funeral Home is serving family.



Obituary

Born Feb. 24, 1929 in Pryse, Ky, **Divine Providence Sister Elizabeth Anne Durbin** entered eternal life Dec. 27, 2016 at Holy Family Home, Melbourne. She was 87 years old and a professed member of the Congregation of Divine Providence for 68 years.



Sister Elizabeth Anne Durbin, C.D.P.

Thelma Mary was the oldest of 10 children born to Pius and Effie Durbin. She is preceded in death by her brothers Francis Leo and Amos and her sisters Sarah and Virginia. She is survived by her brother Pius and her sisters Clara, Mary, Carolyn, and Divine Providence Sister Francis Anne and nieces and nephews.

Sister Elizabeth Anne attended Cedar Grove Public School in Pryse, Ky. This was a rural place in the foothills of Appalachia and the Durbins were the only Catholic family in the area.

In an interview for the *Messenger*, Sept. 10, 2004 when Sister Elizabeth Anne retired to Holy Family Home, she recalled the development of her vocation. When Bishop William Mulloy came for confirmation in 1949, he wanted to meet this large Durbin family. He asked each child's name and grade. Sister Elizabeth Anne responded that she did not go to school because she had finished the eighth grade. The bishop stated that this would not do and the next week she received a letter from the principal at St. Agatha Academy in Winchester. Sister Elizabeth Anne attended this high school that was staffed by the Sisters of Divine Providence. The sisters' dedication and deep prayer life inspired her to seek a closer union with God. Sister Elizabeth Anne liked her teachers and their life. The more she thought about it, the more she wanted to have that same life. After much prayer and with the encouragement of her parents, Sister Elizabeth Anne responded to this call from God and entered St. Anne Convent on October 11, 1946.

In her reflection for her golden jubilee, she remembered this journey. Sister Caroline Mary and her mother traveled

with her by train from Winchester. No one was at the station to meet them so they took the city bus to Melbourne. As they walked up the hill, Sister Elizabeth Anne thought they would never make it to the top and she wondered if anyone really lived in the big building. She asked Sister Caroline Mary where she was going. The response was, "You must learn to trust in Divine Providence." With that trust, Sister Elizabeth Anne made her first profession of vows Aug. 29, 1948 and final vows on Aug. 29, 1953.

After making profession, Sister Elizabeth Anne moved to Theological College in Washington, D.C. where she worked in the dietary department from 1948 to 1969. She helped prepare meals for 200 seminarians, priests and staff. Eventually she took over the bakery where her creative skills flourished. Sister Elizabeth Anne once said that she wanted to see how long she could go without repeating a recipe. She went seven months without baking the same dessert twice. Sister was also famous for her fine Christmas parties and special Christmas cookies.

In 1969 Sister Elizabeth Anne returned to Kentucky where she worked in dietary in the chancery in Covington until 1988. From then until 1996 she took care of Bishop William Hughes and his house on Wallace Ave., Covington. She went every day to prepare his meals, do the cleaning and whatever else needed to be done. She enjoyed this ministry very much since the bishop was a very gentle person. Bishop Hughes described her as "very devoted, very prayerful, very loyal and very capable. She was an excellent cook and she was very attentive to whatever my needs were."

Sister Elizabeth Anne continued in dietary at the Cathedral rectory, Covington, from 1996 to 2003. She prepared good, wholesome meals for bishops, priests, staff and their guests. Besides her assigned ministries, Sister Elizabeth Anne was very involved in the local community. She always enjoyed working with people and receiving what they had to offer. She was a Eucharistic minister at the Cathedral parish and at St. Elizabeth Hospital. Sister participated in community service with the retired in Golden Towers and visited the sick in the hospital.

Sister Elizabeth Anne recalled that one of the greatest things she ever did was visit the Motherhouse in St. Jean de Bassel, France. She had the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the founder, Blessed John Martin Moye. The trip included a visit to Rome and an outdoor papal Mass at the Vatican. She also stated that her "greatest accomplishment is my commitment to Christ and my vows of poverty, chastity and obedience."

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Dec. 29, at Immaculate Conception Chapel, Melbourne, with burial in the Convent Cemetery, Melbourne, Ky.