

**SISTER KATHRYN LEAHY**  
*November 11, 1919 – October 18, 2019*

Catherine Elizabeth Leahy was born November 11, 1919, to Thomas Leahy and Barbara (Bauer) Leahy. She was baptized Catherine Elizabeth on January 13, 1919, in Ewing, Nebraska.

Catherine attended rural school and Ewing, Nebraska, Public High School. In her junior year she transferred to St. Mary's Academy and boarding school in O'Neill, Nebraska. After guidance from the Franciscan Sisters and a Jesuit retreat, she gave serious thought to becoming a Franciscan Sister.

In 1936 she arrived at Stella Niagara, New York, with two other candidates to enter the novitiate. She made final vows at Stella Niagara in 1941. She received the name Sister M. Bartholomew. In May 1938, she chose to belong to the Midwest Province (Sacred Heart Province.)

In 1938 she was sent to Normal School in Buffalo to be taught by the Stella Niagara Sisters. After three years she received a lifetime teaching certificate and was given her first teaching assignment to teach at St. Agnes Academy and Boarding School in Alliance, Nebraska.

Sister Kathryn was encouraged to take education classes during the summer to keep up with changes in education. Summer months were devoted to study for higher degrees. For over thirty years, Sister Kathryn taught and did administrative work in the schools in Nebraska, South Dakota, and Colorado. She was the Superintendent of Education for the Diocese of Grand Island.

During the 1960's, Sister Kathryn spent several years at the Generalate in Rome taking classes in theology at Regina Mundi. This gave her the opportunity to experience the opening of Vatican Council II and to be in St. Peter's Square at the time of Pope John XXIII's death. She received the first blessing of newly-elected Pope Paul II. She welcomed the new directions set by Vatican II. After Vatican II, she chose to return to her baptismal name, Catherine, but changed the spelling to Kathryn.

Sister Kathryn served a black community in Alabama; and taught religion to children on the US military bases located in Germany. In her retirement years, she was a pioneer in parish ministry with a special zeal for the elderly, homebound, and residents at St. Mary Magdalen Nursing Home. Among many valued ministries, Sister Kathryn made weekly visits to women in the Denver County Jail.

Sister Kathryn officially retired to Alliance, Nebraska. Despite her poor eyesight, Sister Kathryn read everything she could get her hands on. She shared her passion of peace and justice with anyone who would listen. Family was important; she stayed in communication with them through letters, cards, and phone calls. Monthly letters were sent to friends and sisters.

Community was also important to Sister Kathryn. At mealtime she would have sisters and staff sing a song such as "Oh Susanna," not just one verse but six or seven! Sister Kathryn would sing off-key and at the top of her lungs to her favorite song, "How Great Thou Art" as she went down the hallways and when she went outside to sit in the sun. After the evening meal she would wheel herself upstairs to engage sisters in Solitaire, Scrabble, or play against herself.

As Sister Kathryn continued to lose her sight and hearing, she drew her strength from prayer. Her faith continued to deepen with the loss of sight and hearing and as she physically could do less. She attended Mass and communion prayer services for the graces she received.

On Friday, October 18, 2019, Sister Kathryn died at Marian Residence in Alliance, Nebraska. At the time of her passing, she was surrounded by her sisters at Marian Residence. Her Wake was held on Tuesday, October 22, 2019, and her Mass of Resurrection was on Wednesday, October 23, 2019. Both services were held at Marian Residence in Alliance, Nebraska. Sister Kathryn was buried at Calvary Cemetery, Alliance, Nebraska. A meal was served at Marian Residence following the burial.