

*SISTER MARY SHEILA*

*OF THE HOLY TRINITY*

*KNOWLES*



*BORN TO EARTHLY LIFE:*

*MARCH 22, 1921*

*BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE:*

*JULY 7, 2006*

**Sister Sheila Knowles**  
**Province of U.S.A. & Canada**  
**1921-2006**

Despite the stress and anxiety of the war years (1939-1945), Sister Sheila grew up with a sense of lightheartedness and a vision for her future. She was the youngest of six children and the only girl. Spoiling from her brothers was something that added fun to her growing years. Sheila was born in Dublin, Ireland, but later the family moved to London, England, where her father operated a retail business. Her mother's claim to fame was her culinary art in producing delicious desserts and pastries.

Whether good desserts contribute to growth or not, Sister Sheila did grow from being a two-pound baby at birth, March 22, 1921, to being as tall as her brothers. As an adult, standing with the twins, the three were considered triplets. Incidentally, those twin brothers were Servite priests, and to them Sister Sheila was very attached. Of her five brothers, four preceded her in death: James, Albert, Brendan and Father Paul. Father John, her only remaining brother, was a loving presence in Sheila's life until her death.

After her profession at Stafford, England on September 8, 1944, Sister Sheila was assigned to ministry in St. Joseph's, Girvan, Scotland for eight years before coming to the Province of United States and Canada in 1952. At that time she was known as Benedicta, and only after Vatican II did she go back to using her baptismal name. Her first assignment of five years was in the Bishop's House in Providence, Rhode Island. That was followed by five years in Wilmington, California. From 1962 until 1974, Sister Sheila returned to the British Isles and served in Stafford, England; Stranraer, Scotland and Killiney, Dublin before returning once again to Wilmington, California where she ministered for her remaining thirty-two years of religious life. Her training and inherited culinary skills were well utilized during all

of those years. In addition to producing magnificent dinners and pastries, etc. she enjoyed creating her jigsaw quality – ornate altar cloths and various pieces. Flowers and gardening were another major hobby. She also enjoyed children and as a volunteer helped as a teacher aide at Sts. Peter and Paul School. Benedictine spirituality appealed to Sheila and she spent many happy days at the Benedictine Monastery in Oceanside, California.

She loved her family and made friends easily. Generosity was her most outstanding quality. In her turn, she was extremely lucky in raffles – though she never did win the Lotto! Travel was another love. She loved to go! This was especially evident in her visit to her sister-in-law in Majorca. Being an extravert she loved people and places.

Receiving her American citizenship was an achievement and gave her great joy; she treasured the gifts she received on that occasion. Celebrations of jubilees – Golden and Ruby – of religious profession gathered her friends around her. Over the years she also had the joy of visits from her twin brother priest.

Throughout her life, however, Sister Sheila's health gave cause for anxiety. Maybe being a two-pound baby did have some repercussions, or maybe it was a consequence of the war, but she struggled with health problems frequently throughout her life. She moved to Jeanne Jugan Residence in San Pedro, California, in 2001, settled in, adjusted and loved the peace and quiet. She enjoyed the companionship of so many others and the wonderful care of the Little Sisters of the Poor. In 2001 her brother, Father John Knowles came to spend some time with her, which no doubt was enriching for both.

Apart from the crafts and activities organized for all the guests, working quietly on her jigsaw puzzles continued to fascinate her, while the hours of quiet needlework contributed to her contemplative spirit. Devotion to the Eucharist and the Trinity

had colored the fabric of her life over the years – the sleepless nights and the weeks in hospital. As years began to take their toll, she was no longer as energetic. But at times, as the cheerful Sheila came to the surface, her face would light up, and on good days, she was her old self, gracious, eager to share, with a little of her flourish and charm. However, toward the end, as her energy and interest diminished, she kept her eyes closed, seemed to sleep more, and gradually lost consciousness. On Sunday, July 2, 2006, surrounded by her sisters she went peacefully to God to join her brothers and all the saints. The Wake Service was held in our Convent in Wilmington, the Mass of Resurrection in our parish church, SS. Peter and Paul, and the burial in All Souls Cemetery in Long Beach, California, on July 7, 2006. Now her good works go with her. May she rest in peace with her family, her religious Sisters and her friends.