

SISTER REGINA

OF THE TRINITY

BRUNELLE



BORN TO EARTHLY LIFE:

APRIL 9, 1933

BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE:

DECEMBER 18, 2016

Sister Regina Brunelle
Province of U.S.A & Canada
1933 – 2016

Lois Priscilla Brunelle, as she was baptized at birth, was born in Nashua, New Hampshire on April 9, 1933. She was the youngest of the family which included her older sister, Lorraine, and her brother, Francis (Sonny.) Her parents, Olivette and Francis were hard working, devout Catholics and brought up their children well. Coming at the end of the Depression, it wasn't easy to raise a family but despite the hardships theirs was a united and happy family, sustained and strengthened by the deep piety and faith characteristic of the Franco-Americans who settled in the communities of northern New England.

In religious life at that time not a lot of conversation was spent on our remembrances of our childhood, indeed, we were too busy keeping up with the practices and culture of our new way of life. Lois was the first American vocation to enter the Novitiate at Brenton Road and she entered it with zeal. In fact, everything she did, she did with enthusiasm. Whether it was waxing the floor or driving the community car she was "into it." Her hands might be full of splinters after she finished, but that wax would say put. As for her ability with the car, it was unforgettable. Arriving for an initial visit Sr. Regina and the Novice Mistress met me at the train station. It was dark in the parking lot and we were glad to be in the warmth of the car. Without further delay I was introduced to the prayers for travelers and we took off, literally, Regina forgot about the cement bumpers in front of the parking spaces. When we came down she asked, "Do you think I should go forward or back up? With a small sigh, Sr. Antony replied, "Well we already did the front wheels, let's go forward."

Sr. Regina made her first vows on February 2, 1956 in St. Joseph's Church. She was accompanied by Sisters Bernadette and Rose Roffelsen. After completing her BA, she was given her obedience for Cluny School, Newport and began her teaching career. Regina had always wanted to

go to the missions, but her next mission was to teach at Little Flower High school in Philadelphia. Finally after a few years her dream was realized and she was off to Haiti to teach English at the girls' school in Sainte Rose in Port au Prince. and during the weekends she had the opportunity to work at a poor clinic in the mountains. She was very happy to finally be a missionary, like Anne-Marie.

All her religious life she maintained a deep devotion to our Foundress and never tired of telling others about her and her missionary endeavors. However, like all good things, this mission was to change as well. Sr. Regina was brought back to Newport where she made her Final Vows on August 15, 1962. After this she assumed the role of novice mistress in Cluny. It was not a great time to begin this new work, but Sr. Regina, true to form, gave it all her energy.

It was a time of change, one which we still live in, and things were done differently. The opportunity to work directly with the poor of Appalachia, in the mountains of West Virginia arose and Sisters Regina and Marie were sent to make small foundations and to be the presence of the Church in this largely "unchurched" area. Here Regina was truly immersed in what she did best, helping people. She taught children who had never heard about God, she built houses and opened a store for those who needed food and clothing. She visited the sick and elderly, she counseled the troubled and anxious. Literally, she gave everything to that mission and the people she loved. And amid her other duties she went back to school to become a counselor so she could help those who could not pay for this needed assistance.

After over nearly two decades in West Virginia, diminished numbers and aging called Regina back to Rhode Island and after a brief respite she began a program at Berakah to deepen her spiritual life and enjoy some well-earned "time off."

Completing her spiritual renewal she then set off for Hamilton, Ontario where she lived in a small apartment amid young unwed mothers and

their offspring encouraging them to further their education and counseling them for their future, and of course, babysitting.

It was here in her small apartment that she sat down to rest in an armchair and quietly went home to the Lord of her life, her missionary endeavors finished, she begins her eternal reward. Well done, good and faithful servant, you truly died with your “boots on.”

Sr. Regina’s work among the young women at Angela’s Place, as it was called, was so effective and her loving and caring so deeply felt that after her death the house was re-named “Regina’s Place” and a scholarship program was established in her memory.