



Remembering

Ruth Garbani, CSJ

August 19, 1927 - April 25, 2019

Ruth Jeanette was born in San Diego, California, on August 19, 1927, to Benjamine Vincent Garbani, a native of Gresso, Switzerland and Juliet Mary Domenigoni Garbani, who was from Paris, France. Ruth's parents brought their youngest child home to the family's cattle ranch in the hill country of Descanso to meet her brothers and sisters: Elmer, Mary, Robert, Glen, Mabel, Benny and Virginia.

The ranch, purchased by her father in 1910, became the Garbani family's pride and joy. Ruth told many stories of her growing up on the ranch and learning with her older brothers and sisters not only to ride horses, milk cows, tend to the animals, play sports but also to drive cars at a very early age. She was always grateful to have had a loving and close knit family. She knew it was the strength of their family that got them through the loss of her brother, Benny, a U.S. Marine who was killed in Okinawa as World War

II ended in 1945.

Ruth attended Descanso Elementary School and Cathedral Girls High School in San Diego, where she first met the Sisters of St Joseph. After graduation, she moved to Los Angeles to live with her sister, Virginia and attend Woodbury Business School. During this time she thought often of what she had witnessed of religious life at Cathedral. Although it was a difficult decision, Ruth left the ranch and family on February 11, 1949 and entered the postulate of the Sisters of St. Joseph at St. Mary's Academy in Los Angeles. On August 15, 1949, she received the habit and the name Sister Mary Rene. Later she returned to her Baptismal name. First vows were made on August 15, 1951; final vows on August 15, 1956.

After receiving her Bachelor's Degree from Mount Saint Mary's College and her California Teaching Credential, Ruth dedicated all her ministry years to elementary and secondary education.

Her first teaching assignments were in Los Angeles at Transfiguration School and St. Mary's Academy. Then she returned to the San Diego area to teach at University High School and finally to the Academy of Our Lady of Peace where, as she said, were "twenty-eight special years" of teaching with other CSJs and lay faculty. In later years she managed the Book Store. Being the organizer that she was she said, "I loved every minute" of making all go smoothly.

The Garbani family always kept a close relationship with their Italian/Swiss families in Europe. During the War years they sent care packages to the relatives in Paris. After the war various family members traveled to France and Switzerland. Ruth also traveled once with Bernadette Reed and a second time with Sister Dolores Anchondo. What surprised all of them was a trip to the Gresso, Switzerland cemetery where they found the grave markers of the very large Garbani clan.

Family was very important to Ruth. They did for her and she did for them. Her many nieces and nephews described her as "one hundred percent natural, warm and kind, Aunt Ruth" who spent time with them. Having been very athletic in her early years, she impressed them with her knowledge of football and baseball either with her at stadium games or watching on TV.

Ruth called her mother "the greatest lady who ever lived and felt it was a blessed time to have been able to be her mother's weekend caregiver during the last twelve years of her life. She said, "I learned more about my mother in those twelve years. I experienced

her great sense of humor and her gratitude for everything." Ruth and her sister, Virginia, considered each other best friends, which started in childhood as the last two of the Garbani children and continued through their adult life. Ruth was with Virginia during her courageous battle with cancer. After Virginia's death Ruth became the last living member of her immediate family.

Ruth's necrology would not be complete without a reference to Sparky, the dog pictured with Ruth in our CSJ DAY BY DAY book. Ruth often took care of dogs when asked and so it was easy for her to say "yes" to adopting Virginia's dog, Sparky. Ruth always credited Sparky with making her "get up and go" for the daily walks on grassy turf near Sea World.

Ruth did not travel often to events in Los Angeles, but it was during her 50th Jubilee celebration at Carondelet Center and later in San Diego not only with sisters from her novitiate, but also family and friends that she said, "I cannot say how much fifty years as a Sister of St. Joseph means to me. It is overwhelming." This year

for her 70th Jubilee in March she was again in Los Angeles, but this time hospitalized as she accepted her last assignment on this earth. A few weeks later she completed the journey on the unique path God had given her to travel.

We can imagine the celebration of the sisters, other friends and her beloved Garbani family as she reached her Heavenly destination. No

doubt she is saying again, "This is overwhelming."
Dear Ruth, rest in peace. ❖

~ This necrology was written from contributions from Sisters Dolores Anchondo, Frances Baker and Barbara Dugan.

