



Sister Anne Bernadette Stead, CSJ
November 21, 1923 ~ December 15, 2022

Sister Anne Bernadette Stead can serve as a model for the "age of active wisdom" as described by Sister Sandra Schneiders. She was always well aware of those who needed her ministry and adapted to what needed to be done. At Carondelet Center she knew the value of genuine creative leisure time - baking, creating artistic gifts, writing whimsical poetry. Although her pace was a little slower, one marvels at all she accomplished with a ready smile.

Born in San Diego on November 21, 1923, Elizabeth Jane Stead started second grade at our Lady of Angeles School in 1929 after the Sisters visited door to door seeking to increase the enrollment. She said, "Kindness and humility were evident in the Sisters in many ways as they instilled in us a real love of God through prayer." Her parents, Robert Edward Stead from Genesco, Illinois, and Agnes Pearl Eckenrode, born in San Diego, valued Catholic education. Elizabeth Jane was the youngest of seven children, all of whom were born in San Diego. Harry was the oldest, then Roger, Helen, Frank, Roberta, Margaret Anne, and, finally, Elizabeth Jane.

When she was asked about her entrance into the convent, she said, "I entered on September 2, 1942 (a Friday) and was teaching the third grade at St. John the Evangelist School the following Monday. I taught there the whole year." She received the habit and was given the name Sister Anne Bernadette on August 15, 1943. This name was to honor her grandmother, Bernadette. Sister was preparing to celebrate her 80th Jubilee this year.

Sister recounted, "In 1945 I was sent to St. Emydius School in San Francisco and there learned 'Primary Grade Teaching' from Sister Francis Hartnett, for which I will be forever grateful. I've used that knowledge throughout all my teaching years." For over 53 years Sister ministered as a teacher and, at times, served as assistant principal. Fifteen schools benefited from her expertise in grades 1-8, from California to Washington to Hawaii. She had fond memories of the time she spent in Hawaii from 1949-1957. She recalled that every day was joyful and full of good experiences. Sister said, "In Hawaii there were some days when I would teach Kin the morning, and college at Chaminade in the afternoon." She especially loved the Hawaiian spirit of hospitality, with gentleness, peace, and great joy in serving others.

From 1985 - 1998 Sister was the Director of the Extended Care Program at St. Cecilia School. This involved organizing enrichment classes for the inner-city primary students to assist them in their studies and

life skills. She said, "During the day I taught K, 1st and 2nd graders "Writing to Read" on computer, as well as creative writing to students in other grades. The Extended Care program took place after school.

The "Writing to Read" program computers and materials were provided by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Sister recalled that twenty-eight boxes arrived midyear, and she learned to assemble computers in a dusty classroom stockpiled with extra desks.

From 1998-2010 Sister focused her boundless energy and enthusiasm on this program. She assisted the Archdiocese in establishing it for inner city students. Still not finished with her ministry of education, Sister studied the Riordan Foundation Course and became a Trainer for the trainers. She visited schools all over the Archdiocese, often traveling by city bus.

Two special honors that we know of were conferred on her. In 1994, she was awarded an Instructional Grant from the California Writing Project at USC. In 1995, Sister was named one of ten outstanding teachers of the year by Hughes Aircraft. This honor recognized her dedication and talents as a teacher.

Sister Anne Bernard's life attests to the saying from the Persian poet Gibran, "Work is love made visible." Her spirituality of work was based on a sense of sacramentality, on the idea that everything that is, is holy, and our hands consecrate it to the service of God. For her it might be baking, knitting, assembling computers, paperwork, teaching, or painting. Her spirituality put her in touch with her own creativity. It drew her out of herself and helped form her to become more of who God desired her to be. This spirituality of work immersed her in a search for human community and service.

On September 28, 2010 Sister came to live at Carondelet Center as a very active retired Sister. In her spare time, she helped her family members with their needs and assisted anyone who became ill. She found many ways to support the boutique and attended many activities when she was available.

As a classroom teacher for 53 years, serving the Archdiocese of Los Angeles for an additional 12 years, and continuing to serve others as she approached the age of 100 years, she, with her generous life, reminds us to be "all of which woman is capable," at any age, in any setting.

We thank you, dear Sister, for your community spirit, good humor and everyday common sense. We will certainly miss the cookies you provided daily. But more than that, we will miss your joyous, generous presence in our midst. Rest in peace.

~ Written by Sister Frances Baker, CSJ