



Sr. Loretta Petit, OP

December 3, 1917 – May 15, 2010

Sr. Loretta Petit (92) died on Saturday, May 15, 2010, in Akron, Ohio, in her 73rd year of religious profession.

Born to Charles and Celena (Gardner) Petit in Doylestown, Ohio, Rita was one of eight children. She entered the Novitiate of the former Sisters of St. Dominic of Akron in 1935, and made her First Profession of Vows as Sr. Mary Loretta in 1937.

Sr. Loretta earned a BA from Siena Heights College (Adrian, MI), an MA from Catholic University of America (Washington, DC), and a PhD from Western Reserve University (Cleveland, OH). Her ministry in education brought her to many schools including St. Bernard, Akron, OH (1937-40); St. Vincent HS, Akron, OH (1942-64); and St. John College, Cleveland, OH (1964-66). After earning her doctorate, she ministered at the University of Dayton, where she was named Professor Emeritus in later years. Sr. Loretta went on to minister as the exchange professor at the Catholic College of Education in Sydney, Australia (1983) and at Federal University of Parana, Brazil (1989). She also had the opportunity to study comparative education in London, Marxist education in the Soviet Union and China, and church-state relations in New Zealand. In 2006, she retired to the Akron Motherhouse, where she continued to minister in various volunteer roles.

Over the years, Sr. Loretta served the Akron congregation in many leadership capacities: Director of Novices (1967); First Councilor (1969-73); member of the Education and Apostolate Commission; and member of the Elms School Board and the Finance Commission. She also served numerous times as Chapter delegate and member of the Chapter Program Committee (1992-93).

Sr. Loretta was also a gifted writer and historian. In 1994, she wrote *Friar in the Wilderness*, which highlighted the first bishop of Ohio, Edward Dominic Fenwick, OP, and the original foundations of Dominican women and men in the US. Sr. Loretta was also a member of Project OPUS (History of the Order of Preachers in the United States), the team of Dominican women and men who wrote an integrated history of the Dominican Order in the US. She was an associate editor and co-authored five chapters of the group's 2001 Volume I publication of *Dominicans at Home in a Young Nation: 1786-1865, The Order of Preachers in the United States; A Family History*.

Sr. Loretta was an avid sports fan, and for many years following her ministry at St. Vincent, she continued to attend and cheer for the school's athletic teams. She also followed all of Cleveland's professional sports teams, with a keen interest in the Cavaliers, the team of her now-famous former St. Vincent student LeBron James.

The wake service for Sr. Loretta was held at the Akron Motherhouse on Monday, May 17. The funeral Mass was held on Tuesday, May 18, at the Akron Motherhouse, and followed by burial at Holy Cross Cemetery.

Memorial gifts in Sr. Loretta's memory may be sent to Dominican Sisters of Peace, 2320 Airport Dr., Columbus, OH 43219-2098.