Vita of Sister Charlene Young
1919-2021

Just a little over a year ago, Sister Charlene celebrated her 100th birthday with an Open House that drew family and friends, young and old, from afar, everyone recognizing that this event was one never-to-be experienced again. Today, sadly, we gather with that memory but with so few of those who would otherwise be here for this celebration of life of one special person.

Sister Charlene was an inveterate diary keeper. In the latter years of her life she spent much time going over her diaries dating back to the 1930’s and also her photo albums of pictures collected over the years. She said that reading what was written there and seeing the pictures took her back as if they were current happenings.

Here are a few of the happenings and places of her life.

Sister Charlene Young was born November 11, 1919, the second of seven children, to Joseph Albanus Young and Gertrude Marie Wechter on the family farm in North Auburn. She was baptized Marcella Marie at Mother of Sorrows, the parish church. The Tiffin Franciscan Sisters were her grade school teachers and were her inspiration. She said she always wanted to go to the convent. Family needs, however, prevented her from acting upon that desire immediately after graduation from New Washington High School. She helped her older sister support the family and take care of the farm when Parkinson’s Disease disabled her father. Among her first jobs were what she called “maternity cases,” taking care of mothers, their newborns, and the other children in the family for the six weeks following childbirth.

Finally, at age 24, Marcella was able to follow her dream. She quit her job working in the packing department of a metal products factory in Shelby, Ohio, and, on September 6, 1944, entered St. Francis Convent in Tiffin. She received the habit and the name, Sister Mary Charlene, on August 12 a year later. She made temporary vows on that date in 1947 and final profession on August 12, 1950.
Sister Charlene’s life of ministry took her to many places and many positions over the years. At the motherhouse, her experience of driving was immediately put to work. When she entered, only one Sister was a driver and she was not often available. Sister Charlene became the convent chauffeur. She also worked in the kitchens, the laundry, and helped with housekeeping. Her first missions were as housekeeper at Bismarck, St. Sebastian, and St. Joseph, Fort Jennings. Back in Tiffin, she worked part-time as an assistant on the floors at the Men’s Home, chauffeuring, and in the kitchens. During the 15 years until 1967 that she was Director of Housekeeping Services at the convent, she took college classes and seminars and worked to become certified as an Executive Housekeeper. She then, until 1973, became Directory of Housekeeping Services at Lourdes Hospital in Paducah, Kentucky. In 1974, she became the Director of “Toddlers Inn,” a childcare facility for 50 infants and children under age 6 that was used by Lourdes Hospital employees and others.

After being a participant in a CPE program, Sister Charlene moved back to Tiffin where she was Motherhouse Administrator, 1979-1984. Later she became the receptionist and the Director of Support Services at St. Anthony Villa, Toledo. Sister Charlene was so versatile she later became a part-time nurses’ aide at St. Francis Home, something she picked up again after serving from 1987-1995 as Director of Pastoral Care at Our Lady of the Way Hospital in Martin, Kentucky. After resigning as nurse aide at the Home, she volunteered there in the Pastoral Care Department until she was no longer able. At the time of her death on January 4, 2021, she was a Minister of Prayer.

Sister Charlene was preceded in death by her parents, her siblings and in-laws, Dorothy and Richard Kreim, Donald and Rose Young, Norbert and Alice Young, Mary Angela and Ray Hook and Donald Horning, and Eldon Young. Surviving are her brother and sister-in-law, Dr. Robert and Chris Young and her sister-in-law, Norma Young, 24 nieces and nephews and a greater number of great and great-grand-nieces and nephews.

May Sister Charlene rest in peace.