

SISTER MARY AIDAN DONALDSON, RSM 90 years of religious commitment

MOBILE — On Saturday, March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation of Lord, the Sisters of Mercy and their associates gathered in the chapel of the Convent of Mercy to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Sister Mary Aidan Donaldson, RSM.



Sr. Mary Aidan Donaldson, R.S.M.

The only child of John and Ellen Donaldson, Sister Mary Aidan was born 1908 in Newry County Down, Northern Ireland. With the death of her mother when she was only 4 years old, Sister was raised by her father and loving aunt. While attending a boarding school, two Sisters of Mercy from a port city in the United States, called Mobile, came seeking girls to join the order.

Sister Mary Aidan often stated that at first she said “no,” but later decided she would “give it a try for a while.” After making the decision to enter she had to wait two years to get a visa from England. Thus in September 1927, at the age of 19, Sister arrived in Mobile and began her first teaching assignment at St. Joseph Catholic School on Springhill Avenue. Her ministry during her active life was teaching and administration in schools in Baltimore, Md., Bir-

mingham, Huntsville and Bessemer, Ala., Pensacola, Fla., as well at St. Mary, St. Joan of Arc and St. Ignatius schools in Mobile. In her later years she served in varied roles in St. Ignatius Parish as pastoral minister, coordinator of the pastoral transportation committee and moderator of the Legion of Mary.

At the age of 89, Sister Mary Aidan announced her retirement from the active ministry of teaching and took up a new venture, the art of water-color painting under the tutelage of Henry Swann and later of a former eighth-grade student, Kathe Byrnes. At the time of her 95th birthday, 20 of her floral paintings were shown at an exhibit entitled “Praising God’s

Beauty.”

Exemplifying an old adage that says “Religious Sisters never really retire, they just get recycled,” Sister Mary Aidan continued to minister through her 100th year at the former Portier Place, a senior living community, by leading a weekly Communion Service for the residents.

Presently at the age of 108, Sister continues to minister to the Sisters with whom she lives at the Convent of Mercy and is one of the first to greet and welcome visitors with her Irish and Southern charm and in the tradition of the Venerable Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy. The motto engraved in her profession ring, My Jesus, all for thee, continues to guide and direct her every action.

One can well observe that Sister Mary Aidan’s “I will give it a try” has extended into 90 years of serving God and God’s people. Sister has the distinction of not only being the most senior member of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, she is the senior member of Sisters of Mercy worldwide, who number approximately 7,000.



Fr. Saleth Mariadoss, HGN, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Lillian, and Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi visit with Chase Boler, who was confirmed March 19.

Photo by Sally McKinney



Elaine Scott presented Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi with a check of \$2,000 from the St. Joseph Church Altar Society. The money will be used to support the archdiocese’s seminarians. From left are St. Joseph Pastor Fr. Saleth Mariadoss HGN, Elaine Scott and Archbishop Rodi.

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