



## **Sister M. Aquila Bartosiewicz**

of the Mother of God  
(Wanda Stanislawa Bartosiewicz)  
March 26, 1917 – October 7, 2007

Holy Family Province  
United States of America

“October – the month of the Rosary. It is the month of graces, of hope and trust in the Mother of God, who will come to the aid of her daughters.” (*Diary of Mother Foundress*, October 1, 1901)

In the city of Worcester, Massachusetts, on March 26, 1917, a daughter was born to John and Catherine Bartosiewicz. In the parish Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Wanda was baptized on June 3, 1917. The new-born baby girl would grow and know the love and protection not only of her parents but also of four brothers, Napoleon affectionately called Bolly, Frank, Brother Emmanuel, and John. Raised in an atmosphere of love and trust, she knew through her mother, a deep love and devotion to the Mother of God and it was through imitation of Our Lady that Wanda patterned her life.

Educated in the local parish school, Wanda was a good student, and left home upon graduation to attend Nazareth Academy High School from which she graduated in 1937, becoming a postulant in June 7, 1937. In June, 1938, she entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in Torresdale, Pennsylvania receiving the name Sister Aquila, a name meaning eagle. Her first profession occurred on July 25, 1940. Fortified during the years of spiritual formation she chose Mary, the Mother of God, as the patron and model of her life at the time of her perpetual vows on August 10, 1946.

There was a special quality about the “young women from Worcester.” They seemed to be bonded by a kind of warmth and hospitality and an ability to nurture and support life, especially necessary in the nursing profession. Sister Aquila was one of these women who was also one of the first team of sisters being trained for Nazareth Hospital. Her education took place at Mercy Hospital in Altoona, Pennsylvania.

A mission spirit, evident in new ministry ventures of a young Nazareth, was one that sustained the sisters throughout their many years of service to Nazareth Hospital. Through the years Sister Aquila worked in various departments including the Neo-natal intensive care unit at Nazareth and as a registered nurse for various units of the hospital and finally as a mental health worker and occupational therapist in the Psychiatric Unit. This spirit of sacrifice, love and care of patients entrusted to her care, lasted for close to fifty years of dedicated service at Nazareth Hospital. Her nursing care was also offered to the children of Little Flower House of Providence, Wading River, New York, where she ministered for one year. Two years of her life were spent in the teaching ministry at Sacred Heart of Mary School in Baltimore, Maryland.

During her many years at Nazareth Hospital, Sister Aquila made many faithful friends, among them Father John Gabin, who worked with sister often during the years when he volunteered at Nazareth as a seminarian.

Anyone who knew Sister Aquila, knew the love, pride and support she gave and received from her

family. Breakfast conversations were usually filled with childhood stories as well as the current events in the family. As the only girl growing up in a family of brothers, she had learned the way to their hearts through her sense of humor and her ability to play practical jokes for the amusement of all the members of the family. She was one to even make joking phone calls to family members trying to fool them until they finally realized it was she on the other end of the line. The sisters too, were not exempt from her little tricks and practical jokes which added much to their life in community. Sister was often one to leave special fake surprises on the beds of those members returning from night shift and getting ready to retire. Luckily they were usually received with a great deal of fun and laughter.

Trips to Worcester were an annual event for the sisters and it was Sister Aquila who packed the lunches and snack bags for the stop along the way. Often these return trips were filled with special breads and rolls only available from those special Worcester bakeries. Sister's natural ability in arts and crafts was also visible in the many crocheted projects that she made as gifts for others and was also a special tool used to assist patients in her ministry to them.

In 1996, Sister's health began to fail and she now considered retirement at the Hospital Convent where she ministered in a variety of small ways answering phone and door. When further health needs became evident sister transferred to Mount Nazareth after her first heart attack in 2000. During the years that followed, Sister's life experienced even more limitations, which she seemed to bear with a spirit of patience. Despite these limitations, all of us at Mount Nazareth knew that Sister Aquila loved to sing. One of her favorites, sung for the sisters on feast days and birthdays was Heart of Jesus. She would always smile when we finished, accepting the thanks of the group for the strong harmony that she added.

In 2007, Sister celebrated 70 years in community and the day was met with many smiles and happy remembrances. Shortly after this she again experienced a weakening of her heart and several hospitalizations. She spent the last week of her life with visits from family and friends. Peacefully in the early morning of October 7th, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, Sister Aquila went to meet her Lord certainly accompanied by the Mother of God who was with her throughout her life. In her writings Sister Aquila asked that we too remember to "say a prayer to the Blessed Mother because she is your Mother too."

Sister Aquila, not only did you add harmony to song but also to our life in community. You were a fun-loving person who helped to make Nazareth a home. Thank you Sister Aquila and may you continue to sing praises to the Heart of Jesus and to His Loving Mother throughout eternity.

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