

Sister Mary Zita Green

December 2, 1926 – January 11, 2011



She had a heart that felt, that loved and that served. This could be said of our Sister Mary Zita, who went to her eternal reward on Tuesday, January 11, 2011. Paschal Teresa Green (lovingly known as Pat) joined the community in Millvale after having attended St. Wendelin School in Carbon Center, Butler County, Pa., where she had been taught by the sisters.

After teaching in elementary grades for a very short time, she began teaching in high schools staffed by the sisters, specializing in teaching English. Between 1968 and 1980, Zita ministered in Puerto Rico at the schools in San Antonio and San Jose, where she also served as administrator, assistant superintendant of schools and librarian. When she returned to the states, she became executive director of government programs at the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and later principal at her home school, St. Wendelin.

After spending her sabbatical at St. Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana, Zita continued to minister there as librarian in Periodicals and Research. Zita returned to Pennsylvania in 2001 and ministered as director of religious education at parishes in Chicora, Butler County until she came to Mount Alvernia in 2009. At Mount Alvernia, Zita offered her services in the high school library.

An avid reader, Zita also authored a number of books, including “The First 50 Years,” the story of the first 50 years of our sisters’ presence in Puerto Rico; “St. Wendelin School,” the story of the school from 1845 to 1995; “A Chronology of 125 Years,” events of the Sisters of St. Francis of Millvale from 1866 to 1991; and “Holistic Ministries,” a study of the holistic ministries engaged in by one community of women religious, her dissertation in partial fulfillment for the doctor of ministry degree in pastoral counseling.

Zita was very close to her family and often talked about her siblings and her 100 nieces and nephews. The annual family reunion was always an event to be remembered.

During her time in Puerto Rico, Zita was with a group of sisters who experienced a tragic boat accident. Zita was a survivor of that accident and also a heroine, as she continued to encourage two other sisters to hold on to the capsized boat until help arrived. Many stories were told about that day. Zita’s written account of it was published in the Reader’s Digest a few months later.

After a visit or conversation with other sisters, Zita would often conclude with “If there’s anything I can do for you, let me know” and/or “Pray for me.” We pray now *Eternal rest grant to her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.*