



Sr. Edith Scholl, baptized Barbara Jeanne, was born August 31, 1931, in London, England, the fifth child and only daughter of Francis and Edith Scholl. She moved to Chicago with her family when she was still young and graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in Music Composition. Whenever the subject of vocations came up she had an intuition that if she ever did become a religious, which seemed to her most unlikely, it would be in a contemplative Order. That intuition was ignited when she was beginning her Master's degree. The experience of reciting Compline during Lent with her roommate brought her to the realization that she wanted to dedicate her whole life to the praises of God, and thus on August 6, 1956 she entered Mt. St. Mary's

Abbey, Wrentham. She made her Temporary Profession August 15, 1958 and her Solemn Profession April 16, 1963.

From the beginning her exceptional musical gift was appreciated and fostered, and she herself had a great capacity not only for using the gifts of the Sisters but, most especially, for adapting to our limitations. As a result her musical compositions, written over a period of fifty years, shaped our liturgy and became something beautiful for God in our hearts. We loved them, praised God through them and, in some sense, became them. Thus her desire to dedicate her whole life to the praises of God was multiplied a hundredfold.

Yet Sr. Edith gave us another gift that far surpassed her music. She was a monastic compass for us. Her monastic doctrine and, most of all, her monastic experience and practice were so clear, so balanced and so complete that her example and words always set us in the right direction. This profound integration seems related to two decisions she made in her early years here, years which, as she shared with us, were painfully difficult as she tried to balance her gifts, sensitivities and critical intelligence with the Cistercian way. At some point she decided two things: first, that Christ was worth the loss of everything including her music and, secondly, that she would try never to refuse a request. The result over time was a person for whom God was absolutely central and who enjoyed her gifts with the humility and non-possessiveness of the children of God.

Over the years she served the community as Junior Director, Prioress, Sub-Prioress, music and liturgy teacher and vegetable gardener, but the work she loved best and which she says saved her vocation was milking our herd of cows daily for many years. She researched monastic vocabulary with great interest and enthusiasm and published a very good book on the subject, "Words for the Journey: A Monastic Vocabulary." She also served as Editor of Cistercian Studies Quarterly the last few years of her life.

This past November Sr. Edith received the news that she was terminally ill. At that moment she asked if we could pray the first glorious mystery, the Resurrection, and in the few months since that day she has expressed so much gratitude for her monastic community, for her vocation and for the grace of perseverance. We are so grateful for her life and death in the Lord.