

Sr. Carol Holohan, baptized Ann Teresa, was born in Newcastle, New Brunswick, Canada, September 1, 1923, the next to the last of the five sons and three daughters of Charles and Ann Holohan. She had very beautiful memories of her Canadian childhood.

Her vocation began to grow in her heart when, at the age of fifteen, she read the life of St. Therese of Lisieux. After graduation from high school, Ann had a year of study in the business field and then entered the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1944, remaining in that service for two and one half years during which she received the War Medal. Her brother, John, had entered the Cistercian Monastery of Our Lady of the Valley in 1939, and it was he who told her of the preparation for a convent for Cistercian Nuns in process of construction in Wrentham, Massachusetts, U.S.A. She felt called to enter the new monastery and became the first North American to make her way to Our Lady of Glencairn Abbey in Ireland, the founding house, entering there September 24, 1947. Sister Emmanuel, her name in those days, received the habit in Glencairn

April 5, 1948, arrived in Wrentham with the founding group October 1, 1949, made temporary vows June 4, 1950, changed her stability from Glencairn to Wrentham November 12, 1950, made Final Profession June 4, 1953 and Solemn Profession June 28, 1957.

Sr. Carol's great love was the liturgy. She studied it and became very well informed on the Latin liturgy, especially the chant, which she taught and directed for many years. Eventually she wrote a book about that treasure of our monastic life that is filled with the helpful and original images with which she taught it.

She worked very hard and was, for several years, in charge of our candy business and for many years the sub mistress of novices, a position which endeared her to many. She was a person quick-witted and quick-tempered, repentant and humble, keen, wise and prayerful, fiery, stubborn and altogether wonderful. What we learned from her life, her words and her quickness to say 'Sorry' was that the important thing was to get up and go on after you fall down. The following words of

St. Therese which she treasured and in which she found so much personal meaning, are something of an interior portrait of Sr. Carol: "If you are willing to bear in peace the trial of not being pleased with yourself, you will be offering the Lord Jesus a home in your heart. It is true you will suffer, for you will feel like a stranger in your own house. But do not fear, for the poorer you are, the more Christ will love you."

In a very real way we were built upon Sister Carol Holohan, the first of our foundresses to enter and the last to die. As long as Wrentham lasts, her life will provide us with enough anecdotes to inspire us when we are discouraged and to make us laugh when we are low. She was God's first gift to Wrentham.



Sister Carol Holohan ocs
September 1, 1923 - December 11, 2017