

*Sister M. Norinne Clifford, SHF*  
*January 8, 1917 -- February 16, 2007*  
*Entered the Sisters of the Holy Family July 2, 1935*  
*Final Profession of Vows August 2, 1940*

Sister M. Norinne Clifford, SHF, died at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Holy Family in Fremont on February 16, 2007, after a brief illness.

Born Catherine E. "Kitty" Clifford on January 8, 1917, Sr. Norinne died just a month after celebrating her 90th birthday.

It was a mystery to many who knew her that she joined the Holy Family Sisters; several of her sisters joined the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM Sisters), and Sr. Norinne herself was educated by the same order. According to Holy Family Sisters Marianne Smith and Timothy Cronin, Sr. Norinne was one of a group of Catholic-school girls who helped in different San Francisco parishes, and who were attracted to the Holy Family ministry of teaching catechism to public school children.

Sr. Norinne helped Sr. Scholastica in the school of religion at St. Philips, and went to the Holy Family Sisters. She herself cited "working with children" as her reason for choosing SHF. "We got the best of the family," said Sr. Marianne in a telephone interview.

Sr. Norinne served in day homes and parishes in San Francisco, Alameda County, San Antonio (Texas), San Diego, Fresno, Kailua-Kona (Hawaii) and Las Vegas, before finishing her active ministry at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Daly City and St. James Parish in San Francisco.

"Great" was a word used often to describe her, though Sr. Norinne never acted great. She was humble and self-effacing almost to a fault; "I remember her tearing up the most gorgeous poster she had made because she saw a flaw in it. Then she made another one that was perfect," said Sr. Timothy.

Sr. Marie Ann Brent says of her time with Sr. Norinne in San Antonio: "She took me under her wing when I got there. I suppose my strongest memory of her was her kindness. She was so lady-like in the middle of all that heat, bugs and mud! Her sense of humor was very subtle but she

consistently made me -- and many others -- laugh when there wasn't much to laugh at." Sr. Timothy agrees: "She had a very subtle but cute sense of humor. She'd say something very quietly, commenting on the situation, something very comical but also true."

"After I entered the Sisters, she was the 'baby-charge' sister for my first three months at St. Francis Day Home," Sr. Timothy continued. "I remember that time like it was yesterday. She never lost patience with the babies, and she could get them to go to sleep for their naps -- it was almost like magic. And she never treated us new ones as if we were young and ignorant."

Sr. Marianne said of her, "She did whatever she had to do. Nothing was too much, and nothing was too little. She could do anything. We never had to call a plumber or an electrician -- she could do all that herself."

"She loved her family dearly," said Sr. Marianne, "and she also loved the community." Timothy tells us that "once the day home was robbed, and one morning soon after, she and the other sister were on a streetcar and someone was following them. They found out later that it was Sr. Norinne's father, watching over them."

The three sisters interviewed agree: "A great lady." "A great person, great personality." "Wonderful to live with." "I enjoyed living and working with her." "A great catechist -- a great woman." "How the folks loved her!"

*-- Sr. Carol J. Crater*