



Rita Rinker SL
March 16, 1930 – March 19, 2011

Rita Rinker, also known as Sister Rita Louise, was born in Lakeland, Minnesota.

After finishing high school in Minnesota, Rita went to Webster College where she first met the Sisters of Loretto; she entered the Novitiate on February 15, 1951. Rita earned a BA degree in Music Education from Webster in 1956, a MA in Music Degree from DePaul University in 1967, and a MA in Liturgy from Notre Dame University in 1980.

Rita began her long career as a music and piano teacher at St. Catherine in St. Louis in 1953, going on to St. Ann in Arlington, Virginia, in 1956. Rita served for more than 40 years in El Paso, Texas, beginning in 1964. She taught many students to play the piano and served as classroom music teacher at Loretto Academy, while coordinating music and liturgy and playing the organ for several El Paso parishes: St. Matthew, St. Raphael, Blessed Sacrament, and at Fort Bliss, El Paso. In 1988 Rita served at the Cathedral of Las Cruces, New Mexico. Rita sang with the El Paso Chorale, and she loved and supported the El Paso Symphony for many years.

Rita often visited her mother, Elsie, in Duluth, Minnesota and when Elsie was diagnosed with colon cancer, she moved to Nazareth Hall, El Paso to be near Rita.

Rita celebrated her golden Jubilee with her classmates at Loretto Motherhouse, on April 25, 2001, and with family and friends in El Paso later that year. In her Christmas letter of 2004, Rita wrote: "This summer I was privileged to go to a Henri Nouwen Spiritual Institute in Boston. One of the issues that was addressed was that of the Prodigal Father and of His great love for us. It held real significance for me."

Rita retired in 2009 after back surgery, but she continued to teach her piano students. In August 2010, doctors discovered an aggressive form of pancreatic cancer. Soon after that, Rita was admitted at Nazareth Hall.

Sister Rita Rinker died on Saturday, March 19, 2011, at Nazareth Hall, El Paso, in the 60th year of her religious life. Now she is making eternal music with a smile. We are grateful to you, Rita, for your life among us. Thank you for the many generous ways you shared music with us and with the people of God.