

Maria-de-Lourdes Couto, SGM

Sr. Couto worked at the Protectory of Mary Immaculate as a **childcare worker at Mount St. Ann's in Worcester**. Subsequently, she moved to the Provincial House in Lexington (now Youville Place), and held various positions in the kitchen, dining room, infirmary, switchboard, as a seamstress, anywhere there was a need to fill.

Sr. Maria-de-Lourdes Couto, SGM, 97, died Friday, Feb. 6, 2009, at Mary Immaculate Nursing/Restorative Center in Lawrence, in the company of her fellow Sisters. She had been a Grey Nun for 64 years.

Sr. Couto was born in Lawrence Nov. 8, 1911, the daughter of Mariano Couto and Maria Carreiro, formerly of Portugal.

At the age of 9 months, she was sent to live with her grandmother in St. Miguel, Azores, Portugal, where she resided happily until returning to the United States when she was 13. Her formal education ended when she left Portugal, but her love of learning never waned.

Despite having only the equivalent of a seventh-grade education, she became a fluent writer and an accomplished individual.

In 1944 Sr. Couto gratefully and humbly entered the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, "Grey Nuns" in Cambridge. Her holiness, humility and desire to serve were evident when she took her solemn vows and were carried throughout her varied ministries.

During the post-war years, Sr. Couto served in the kitchens at various institutions run by the Grey Nuns; first at the Protectory of Mary Immaculate in Lawrence (now Mary Immaculate Nursing/Restorative Center), Holy Ghost Hospital in Cambridge, (now Youville Hospital), and then moving to the Provincial House in Wayland, and from there to both **St. Joseph's Orphanage in Nashua**, N.H., and St. Anthony's Orphanage, Toledo, Ohio.

For 14 years, Sr. Couto served lovingly as a missionary in the Northwest Territories, a harsh environment, even at the best of times. However, with her indomitable spirit, she thrived in this remote locale, focusing more on the blessings she found each day rather than the physical circumstances under which she worked.

After transferring to St. Joseph Province in 1965, Sr. Couto worked at the Protectory of Mary Immaculate then as a **childcare worker at Mount St. Ann's in**

Worcester. Subsequently, she moved to the Provincial House in Lexington (now Youville Place), and held various positions in the kitchen, dining room, infirmary, switchboard, as a seamstress, anywhere there was a need to fill.

In addition to her regular duties, Sr. Couto found time to befriend, mentor and counsel Portuguese employees at the various Grey Nun facilities. Her love of her heritage was always evident.

Sr. Couto's holiness was expressed in her benevolent and heartwarming smile and the concern she showed towards those she served. Her warm and loving spirit will forever be remembered as testimony to her love for and devotion to God.

Sr. Couto leaves behind her nephews, Edward Couto of Bedford and Richard Couto of Richmond, Va.; her niece, Rita Pretrella of San Diego, Calif.; and her cousin, Bea Eon of Peabody.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 12:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, for Sr. Couto in the Youville Place Chapel, Lexington, and the burial will follow at Holy Cross Cemetery in Malden.