

Sister Rose celebrated 101st birthday in 2017

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |

Sister Rose Ashour, OSB, the oldest and longest-professed member of St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, died Feb. 15. She was 101.

Rose Mary was born April 17, 1916, in Morrison Bluff to John and Catherine Bauer Ashour.

According to a 2016 *Arkansas Catholic* article celebrating her 100th birthday, Sister Rose said she heard God's call to religious life in eighth grade. However, her father was killed in a car accident the next year, leaving her mother to raise nine children. She entered St. Scholastica at 16 years old and on June 24, 1933, took the name Sister Mary Alcuin Ashour, later changing her name back to her birth name, Rose.

Sister Rose earned bachelor's and master's degrees in secondary education, with additional studies in canon law and moral theology.

She taught elementary school for 39 years, serving at Sacred Heart School in Charleston, St. Anthony School in Ratcliff, St. Boniface School in Bigelow, St. Scholastica School in Shoal Creek, St. John the Baptist School in Brinkley, St. Ignatius School in Scranton and schools in Missouri and Oklahoma. She kept in touch with many of her students and was known for remembering them by name, according to an *Arkansas Catholic* article.

She also was a member of Our Lady of Peace Monastery in Columbia, Mo., serving as sub-prioress from 1976 to 1980. When the Columbia monastery closed in 2010, she returned to Fort Smith to live in the monastery infirmary and later at Chapel Ridge Health and Rehab. In later years, she was in parish and homebound ministry and pastoral care.

During her 100th birthday celebration April 17, 2016, friends and relatives visited her, including some of her 192 nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews. She received a proclamation in her honor from the mayor and a blessing from Pope Francis, which was read aloud.

"St. Benedict's rule is simple and balanced," Sister Rose said in 2016. "... I think I was meant to be a Benedictine."

There are no immediate survivors.

Vespers for the Dead were held Feb. 23 and a Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 24, with burial in the monastery cemetery.