

Atchison, KS



Sister Mary Blaise Cillessen, OSB, 92, a Benedictine sister of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kans., died Sunday, December 30, 2018, at the monastery. The vigil service will be Friday, January 4, at 7 p.m. in the monastery chapel, and the Mass of Resurrection will be celebrated there Saturday, January 5, at 10:30 a.m.

Sister Mary Blaise was born in Coffeyville, Kan., on March 21, 1926, to George and Mary Ellen McNulty Cillessen. She made her monastic profession at Mount St. Scholastica in 1946. She earned her bachelor's degree in music education at Mount St. Scholastica College and her master's from DePaul University School of Music, Chicago. After teaching in elementary schools for 16 years, she served as music instructor at Donnelly College in Kansas City, Kan., Mount St. Scholastica College and Savior of the World Seminary. She later served as director of development and director of alumni and community relations at Donnelly. After a period of caring for her disabled sister, she became registrar and associate dean at Benedictine College. She was active in civic organizations, serving a term as president of the Kansas City, Kansas, Women's Chamber of Commerce and in positions with Zonta International. Retiring from college administration in 2009, she joined the staff of the Mount Conservatory of Music.

Sister Mary Blaise was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters Betty Farrell, Josephine Ruzicka, Mary F. Eshelman and Jeroma Boehm and by her brothers William and H. Francis Cillessen. She is survived by her sister Rita Rinkenbaugh of Coffeyville, nieces, nephews, and her monastic family. Arensberg Pruett Funeral Home (www.arenbergpruett.com) is in charge of arrangements. Memorials may be sent to Mount St. Scholastica or made online at the Mount's web site (www.mountosb.org).