



## Mary Agnes Saya

October 5, 1929 - March 5, 2010

MARY'S LIFE STORY: Known as "Aunt Mary" to nearly everyone, Mary Saya was one of those rare women who consider it pure joy to serve others. She truly embraced her faith and gave high regard to the calling to be the hands and feet of God. Mary never shied away from working hard whether it was on their farm, caring for her family, or volunteering her time within her community. She could find peace and contentment in even the simplest of things such as a sweet treat or a leisurely stroll. Mary was blessed to share nearly forty years with her true love, with whom she established the family she viewed as her greatest blessing. The beginning of the year 1929 was the tail end of a time of prosperity in America known as the "Roaring Twenties"; it was a time saturated with expanding industry, growing technology, and a wealth of opportunity available around every corner. On October 29th of that year the crash of the stock market ushered our nation into the clutches of the Great Depression that held the nation throughout the thirties. The Roberts family in Paw Paw, Michigan was enjoying the newest member of their family in spite of the times. On October 5th the family of Ivan and Bernice (O'Connell) Roberts had welcomed their daughter, Mary Agnes, into their hearts and home. She was one of four children in the family which included brother Earl and sisters June and Wilma. Her father had previously worked as a Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer, but by the time Mary was born, he was working as a DNR officer. Their family moved to Mason County in 1933 with her father's job responsibilities. Mary attended local schools including Custer School, and she graduated from there in 1947. After graduation, Mary worked at the post office in Fountain for a time. A significant part of her life was her relationship with a particular young man she knew as a fellow student in Custer. His name was John Saya, and his family had a dairy and fruit farm at the time. Mary was good friends with John's sister, Angie, and it was Angie who officially played matchmaker, but there was an attraction between Mary and John that neither could deny. After dating for a time, the couple was married on May 28, 1949 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Custer. The newlyweds moved into their first home on North Tuttle Road and welcomed son Michael in 1950, followed by sons Robert, David, and Gary. Their family was dealt a devastating blow, when Michael died at a young age. Mary and John had a farm with beans and wheat, and the farming lifestyle was a family affair. Their boys' job was to pull weeds from the field before the picking season. In order to

make ends meet, John also had a part-time job as a butcher and later as an operator engineer for Robert Nelson. Deer season was a big family event in the Saya home each year, eagerly anticipated by all. They processed deer for hunters in the area and were very busy throughout the entire season with everyone involved in some way. Mary certainly kept busy keeping her family fed, constantly cooking and baking for her growing boys. When they were able to get away, she and John often traveled to Florida during the winter to visit her parents, and to Missouri to visit their best friends. Although Mary's duties as a wife and mother truly kept her busy, Mary always had room in her life for other interests as well. She was graced with a vibrant faith that played a big part in how she lived her life. As a longtime member of both St. Mary's Catholic Church and the St. Rose Altar Society while she was living in Custer, she served her church and community in many ways. After the death of her beloved John in 1989, Mary moved to Ludington with son David's family, where she became a member of St. Simon Catholic Church and their Altar Society as well. She volunteered countless hours at the St. Simon Bargain Center. Mary loved to dance, listen to music, and was always humming something. Her Irish heritage was an influence on her as well and she enjoyed listening to Irish music. Actually, Mary's taste in music was quite diverse throughout her life. She also enjoyed the music of opera and more recently, her favorite artist was Hootie & the Blowfish. If she was walking through a store and one of their songs came on, she would always call attention to it. Mary enjoyed reading and taking walks through downtown Ludington for a blended coffee, or at times some sweet treats from Fannie Mae Chocolates. As much as she enjoyed being a mother, nothing could have prepared Mary for how much she would treasure being a grandmother and great-grandmother. Her grandchildren could do no wrong, could get away with anything, and they knew that what happened at grandma's, stayed at grandma's. Mary had a good stock of markers and poster paint in order to encourage their creativity. Fridays were always marked by grocery shopping with the grandchildren. The love shared with her grandchildren extended to their friends as well. Upon arrival at the house, they would go first to her room and greet her with "Hi Grandma – I love you!" When her first great-grandson Logan was born, he called her "G.G." and from that point on, the name stuck, becoming the preferred name for all of them to call her. Mary Saya was a rare gem who sparkled with the love she had for both her Lord and for others in her heart. She would unfailingly extend her help whenever needed and countless people within her community affectionately called her "Aunt Mary." Her personality was as remarkable as they come, since both graciousness and compassion were evident in her thoughts, words and deeds in many ways. Even when speaking by phone, she was known for her way of sharing her joy in the conversation. Mary was a woman with patience that seemed limitless, but on the rare occasion when that famed patience was tried beyond measure, she left no doubt about how she felt! She was an extraordinary woman and her tender touch and compassionate heart will be greatly missed by those she leaves behind. Mary

will be lovingly remembered by her sons Robert and Gary of Custer, and David and his wife Linda of Ludington; her beloved grandchildren Jessica Saya-Hein and her husband Joel of Ludington, Joshua Saya and his wife Amber of South Dakota, Jennifer Satterfield, and Jason Saya both of Scottville, and Eric Saya and his wife Haley of Ludington; her precious great-grandchildren Keely Satterfield, Logan and Trent Hein, Ryder Saya, Kaden and Baylee; her brother Earl Roberts and his wife Joyce of Idaho; her sisters June Abernathy and her husband Les of Cincinnati, OH, and Wilma Keson of Ludington; and her brother-in-law Stanley Saya and his wife Virginia of Custer. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Mary at 10:00 AM on Thursday, March 11 at St. Simon Catholic Church in Ludington, with Rev. Wayne Wheeler as celebrant. Burial will take place at St. Mary's Cemetery in Custer in the spring. Friends may meet with her family for a time of visitation on Wednesday evening from 7-9 PM at the Stephens Funeral Home in Scottville, and on Thursday morning from 9:00 AM until time of Mass at the church. Those who wish may make memorial contributions to her family. Please visit Mary's personal memory page at <http://www.stephensfuneralhome.net> to sign the guest book, or to leave a memory of Mary for her family.

"A Part of Me" as written in Mary's hand  
Our Heavenly Father,  
you made Heaven & Earth,  
Every animal, bird and tree.  
All things are at your command,  
And you are a part of me.  
Lord, you gave Moses the Ten Commandments,  
And gave Peter the key.  
Heaven was opened by Jesus dying  
And you are a part of me.  
With your love you heal the sick and dying,  
You forgive our sins, whatever they may be.  
Lord, you are Now and Forever  
And you are a part of me. By Mary Saya & the Holy Spirit