This diligent woman of classic goodness, whose passionate commitment to educating the young was unparalleled, died on January 6, 2020 at Carondelet Village in St. Paul. Agnes (Laura Alice) was born in Anoka, MN to Peter A. and Laura (Passman) Iten on March 4, 1926. In 1945 Agnes entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and in 1956 received a BA in English and Education from the College of St. Catherine. She later earned an MED from the U of M in 1970. Agnes taught for over 30 years in many twin-city Catholic elementary schools. During the early ‘60s she was busy teaching “the new math,” not just to grade school students, but also to principals and superiors. In 1978, she moved to Hawai’i and taught for another 20 years. Friends called Agnes a “master teacher,” and one stated that whoever was in her middle school classroom, left it fully ready and prepared for high school.

One friend had this to say: “Sister Agnes lives religion—with her quiet gentleness, her friendly helpfulness, and her classic goodness. She’s been my friend for 32 years.”

Agnes was a passionate proponent of the sanctity of all life. So much so that in 2003 she composed the Poem “Can We Sit Back.” Below are some excerpts.

Can We Sit Back

God "knit me in my mother's womb"
where I was made in the image of God.

Yet, so many stand back and
allow a precious life to be destroyed.
I don't want to choose between
the small number of death penalties
and the forty million abortions.
All life is precious.

As for the babies being born into poverty-
Our Holy Father sees the suffering poor
throughout the world, yet he is Pro-Life.
Mother Teresa worked among the poorest
of the poor, yet she was Pro-Life.
We declare life is an inalienable right,
but do we believe in social justice?

Upon retirement Agnes served 9 years as receptionist for the St. Joseph Administration Center.

Agnes is preceded in death by her parents; stepmother Grace Iten; sisters Myrle and Helen; brothers Joseph and Roy. She is survived by half-sister Gayle Sieg; half-brother Peter Iten; many nieces and nephews; lifelong friends; the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and Consociates. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, January 14, 2020, 11:00 AM, in Our Lady of the Presentation Chapel, 1884 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul, with Visitation at 10:00 AM preceding Mass. Burial was at Resurrection Cemetery in Mendota Heights.

Sister Agnes, rest in love and peace.