



## Anne Louise Bernhard

April 21, 1927 - July 1, 2016

ANNE LOUISE CHAPATY BERNHARD 1927-2016

For her, family and faith in God are everything.

In her passing from this life to the next, Anne Louise Bernhard continues to teach all of us about the power of faith and unceasing strength even in life's worst challenges.

Mother of five, grandmother of 18, servant and friend, Anne Louise Bernhard left this earth to be with the Lord on July 1, 2016, after a long battle with the physical suffering and pain caused by arthritis and a stroke. She was 89 years old.

Through it all, her smile reflected her unrelenting trust in God. Her determined blue eyes inspired her loving doctors and nurses and touched the hearts of caregivers who worked tirelessly to bring her comfort.

Her tenacious energy and fortitude were born on a farm in Loire, Texas, where she was ushered into life April 21, 1927, to parents Annie Kolonko and Alphonse Chapaty.

The fourth of five girls, Anne and her sisters have shared stories about their

Czech heritage, working with their mother and father in the country just south of San Antonio, and their struggles to maintain their farm during the Great Depression, all grounded in a powerful faith in God.

She had recalled spending her younger days picking cotton, growing grapes and vegetables, and caring for horses, cows and chickens while living in a house often lit with lanterns. She and her sisters have told stories about walking several miles to a one-room school house, going to Mass and Sunday picnics at St. Luke Catholic Church, playing in the fields and swimming in the livestock tank.

She once recalled watching fighter planes roar above her farm on World War II training missions. One of her lasting memories includes climbing a windmill to kickstart the blades for pumping water in the heat of long dry, windless summers.

She credited God for pulling her through the high fevers of diphtheria she endured as a young girl. Her deep spirituality and dedication to God was portrayed in stories she told about how she prayed every day, even when a scorpion bit her foot as she knelt in prayer one night.

Anne was 16 years old and in 10th grade when her father died. To make ends meet she quit school, leaving the farm life behind to work at a bank in San Antonio but returning often to visit the cemetery where her father was buried along with two infant brothers she never knew.

On Nov, 8, 1952, at the age of 25, Anne Chapaty married Eugene Anthony Bernhard of San Antonio, a man who had just finished a stint with the U.S. Army during World War II. They met and fell in love while attending supper club socials. They had five children.

Anne stayed home to care for her family as her husband worked two jobs often at night as a machinist for the San Antonio Express-News and a telegraph operator for Western Union to help pay Catholic school tuition for their children.

Shepherded in strong faith, the family of seven could often be found sitting in the front row for Mass each Sunday at Mission San Jose, where Anne served with the Altar Society. She sang in the church choir, joined by all seven members of her family.

A talented seamstress, she often made dresses for her two daughters. Her recipes graced the dining room table with delicious meals. Cakes she designed in the shape of animals were centerpieces for her children's birthday parties. Even into her 80s, she remembered the birthday of each of her children and grandchildren with a card.

She helped care for her mother as she aged. In 1975, her husband died of a heart attack in his sleep at the age of 52.

Anne, who didn't have a high school diploma, checked out books to study and received her G.E.D. She went back to work as a dressing room attendant at Montgomery Ward and a bookkeeper for Steve's & Sons Lumber Yard and Gruen & Miller Flasher Equipment Co.

She was honored with a medal from the Archdiocese of San Antonio for her service to the Catholic Church. She was among those selected from various parishes to serve as an usher at the outdoor Mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II during his visit to San Antonio in 1987.

In her 60s, she journeyed to Italy for a trip with parishioners from her church. It

was one of the few times she had ever traveled on an airplane.

Remaining a widow for about 40 years after her husband died, she drove her own car and mowed her own grass at the house on San Antonio's southside where she surrounded herself with her children and grandchildren. Even to the end, she reveled in the accomplishments of her children and grandchildren, attending high school graduations, college commencements and weddings or celebrating through photos.

Finding strength in God, she attended Mass daily until limits of age restricted her mobility. Close to the Blessed Virgin Mary, even in sickness she was seldom found without a rosary in her hand, which she prayed with reverence.

After suffering a stroke at her home, she lost the ability to speak and eat and was confined to a wheelchair then a bed for most of the year and four months she spent at Westover Hills Rehabilitation Center, where she finally succumbed to her long illness and died in her sleep.

She is free from pain now, finding her independence once again as she continues to pray for us in peaceful reunion with her loving husband, parents and two sisters, Clara Koch and Regina Boullt, who preceded her in death.

She is survived by two sisters, Adele Robinson of Houston and Eulalia Harris of New Orleans; five children, Paul Bernhard and his wife, Barbara, of Boerne; Annette Nevins and her husband, John, of Plano; Louise Raab and her husband, Ronnie, of San Antonio; Thomas Bernhard and his wife, Theresa, of Round Rock; and Don Bernhard and his wife, Tracy, of San Antonio. She has 18 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be from 6 to 9 p.m. followed by readings and a recitation of the Rosary from 7 to 8:30 Thursday, July 7 at Brookehill Funeral Home, 711 S.E.

Military Drive in San Antonio. Funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Friday, July 8, at Mission San Jose Parish at 701 E. Pyron Ave. followed by a procession to the cemetery at 17501 Nacogdoches Road in San Antonio.