



CONGREGATION OF BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION
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News Release

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Benedictine Sister Natalia Barela celebrates century mark

CLYDE, Mo.— Benedictine Sister of Perpetual Adoration Natalia Barela was surrounded by her community, family and friends during a celebration to mark her 100th birthday on July 8, 2008.

Born on that date in 1908 in Albuquerque, N.M., Sister Natalia entered the world before New Mexico was officially granted statehood. The first Model T Ford had just rolled off the assembly line, Theodore Roosevelt was president of the United States and it would be four more years *before* the Titanic would make its historic plunge to the bottom of the North Atlantic.

Sister Natalia's earliest years were spent on a small ranch outside Albuquerque. After the death of her father when she was just a toddler, the family moved to town to be near relatives. She went to public school until the ninth grade when she began attending St. Vincent Academy, a Catholic high school.

After graduation, she took business courses and worked in retail and insurance before entering the Benedictine Sisters in 1929. Throughout her years as a Benedictine Sister, she lived in several of the congregation's communities. However, she is especially fond of her time spent in Arizona, witnessing the sisters' move in 1939 into the Pink Rose of the Desert, Tucson's lovely monastery.

Sister Natalia now resides at Our Lady of Rickenbach, the sisters' health-care facility in Clyde, where she continues to deepen her union with God and remains committed to the vows she professed so long ago.

"I can pray and be more attentive to God when silent," she said. "I am grateful for and have enjoyed all these years. God has never failed me."

Her 100th birthday celebration included a cake and punch reception, which was also attended by a family friend and several nieces and nephews who made the trip from New Mexico and Arizona.

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Benedictine Sister Natalia Barela (top) celebrated her 100th birthday on July 8. (Pictured right) Helping her blow out the candles is Sister Natalia's great-great nephew Jakey, along with his dad, Brian, and Benedictine Sister Benita Leutkemeyer.



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