

SISTER GERTRUDE FOLEY, SC

Sister Gertrude Foley, SC, age 91, was called by God to eternal life on June 16, 2023 at Caritas Christi, the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity, Greensburg, PA, in the 73rd year of her commitment to religious life. Born on March 18, 1932, Sister Gertrude was one of eight children. She was preceded in death by her parents Joseph V. and Stella (Blitzko) Foley; two brothers, Joseph and Thomas; and five sisters, Joanne Foley, Mary Ann Meredith, Eileen Creighton, Margaret Brosmahan, and Rosemary Blashford. She is survived by nieces, nephews, and her religious community.

A Pittsburgh native, Sister Gertrude entered the congregation of the Sisters of Charity in 1950 from Saint Mary of the Mount Parish, on Mount Washington in Pittsburgh, PA. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Classics from Seton Hill University, a Master's degree in Classics from Duquesne University, a Master's degree in theology from Fordham University, and a Doctorate of Ministry in theology from Aquinas Institute of Theology, Dubuque, IA.

For fifteen years, Sister Gertrude taught in classrooms at every level, from elementary to higher education, as well as religious education for adults and children. For four years, she was chairperson of the Teacher Enrichment Conference in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Sister Gertrude held a position at the College of Saint Catherine, St. Paul, MN, where she established and directed a certificate program in pastoral and theological education within the theology department.

While serving as Regional Superior in Arizona, Sister Gertrude accepted a position within the Diocese of Phoenix at the Kino Institute's School of Ministry. The program prepared lay women and men for leadership roles in church ministry. She directed the program for five years, while also serving as an adjunct professor in Pastoral Theology for the University of San Francisco Master's program offered at the Kino Institute. She also taught in the program for permanent deaconate candidates before those men were incorporated into the School of Ministry.

During her four-year term as a member of the Council of the Sisters of Charity, Sister Gertrude designed and directed a Community Formation and Development Program that not only included the formation of newer members but also on-going formation, retirement and retreat committees that engaged a great many of the sisters in participatory leadership for the life of the community.

She was elected to the office of major superior/president of the Sisters of Charity for two terms (1993-2002) and oversaw the construction of Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity.

Sister Gertrude ministered in the Diocese of Greensburg as executive director of the Department of Education and Spiritual Formation. She co-authored *Shaping the Coming Age of Religious Life* (Seabury Press). She served in the national office of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and as chairperson of LCWR Region IV. She was a member of the International Union of Superiors General and served on the program advisory committee for the Center for Religious Life in Chicago. She served on the religious leadership executive committee in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, the Pittsburgh Synod, and the Westmoreland County Unity Coalition in Greensburg. Sister Gertrude ministered as a facilitator-consultant to religious communities throughout the United States, Canada, South Africa, England, Ireland and Australia.

Sister Gertrude received an honorary doctorate degree in 2002 from Seton Hill University for leading by example and representing the pioneering spirit of the founders of the University, the Sisters of Charity. She received The Distinguished Alumni Leadership Award as an outstanding alumnus for her achievements, contributions to her profession, service to community, and loyalty to Seton Hill University.

In 2006, after fifty-six years in active ministry in education and congregational administration, Sister Gertrude thought it was time to slow down, but felt she still had energy to minister to the Catholic Church and its people. She became co-coordinator of Seton Family, a program designed by the Sisters of Charity in 2001, which focused on strengthening lay women and men to reclaim their essential role in the Church of the 21st century. She also was the course designer and facilitator for the Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation at the University of Dayton, a "new way of being Church."

Sister Gertrude was the recipient of the Daughters of Charity, Seton Legacy of Charity Award, Emmitsburg, MD, in 2009 presented to those who have mirrored the example of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton's pioneering spirit through their ministries. She was acknowledged for her leadership and scholarship by the Sisters of Charity Federation for her retreats and lectures in the tradition, spirit and charism of the founders.

Sister Gertrude retired from active ministry in 2021. She received exceptional support and care from the nursing staff and employees at Caritas Christi to whom the Sisters of Charity are grateful.

At the time of her golden jubilee in 2000, Sister Gertrude reflected on her life as a Sister of Charity. "My life has taught me that 'being a sister' is not a state but a process. God is faithful and God's plans are mysterious and amazing. 'Being a sister' requires a lifetime of 'yesses' to God revealed in the humdrum and the ordinary, the challenging and the unexpected. 'Being a sister' has surpassed anything I could have hoped for in my life. I have not regretted a single moment!"

Rest in peace, Sister Gertrude, as your loving and faithful God welcomes you home to be with the Company of Charity.

Family and friends will be received on Tuesday, June 20 at Caritas Christi Motherhouse, 129 DePaul Center Road, Greensburg, PA from 2 pm to 7:00 pm. A prayer vigil with sharing of memories in the Chapel of Assumption will follow at 7:00 pm. A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 10:30 am on Wednesday, June 21. Burial in the Sisters' Cemetery will immediately follow Mass. The funeral liturgy will be live-streamed, access through the link: <http://venue.streamspot.com/2af9eleb>

Memorial contributions may be made to the Sisters of Charity, DePaul Center Road, 144 DePaul Center Road, Greensburg, PA 15601. For more information visit the website, www.scsch.org.

