



Sister Elizabeth Patricia Murphy, OSF *Professed 1962*

"Educating is an act of love." Pope Francis



Sister Elizabeth Patricia Murphy died in Lankenau Hospital on June 30. Like Mother Francis Bachmann, whose death anniversary is also June 30, Sister Elizabeth blessed all those whose lives she touched. She had been a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 59 years. Sister Elizabeth was born in Mallow, County Cork, Ireland. In 1960, a year after she entered the congregation, she left Ireland for Pennsylvania.

Throughout her life, Sister Elizabeth was a profoundly gifted educator. "Education is in my blood," she said. "I love teaching. . . . For me it has never been a job; it's always been a ministry." To her ministry as an educator, she brought both her innate gifts and her formal studies. Her

degree in education was from Neumann University—then Our Lady of Angels College. She also earned master's degrees in reading and pastoral ministry.

In her early years in the congregation, Sister Elizabeth taught in several eastern schools, including St. Paul School in Wilmington. Among the many other children to have the great blessing of being her pupils were the third graders at St. Joseph School in York, Pennsylvania, and the first graders at Corpus Christi School in Willingboro, New Jersey, and at Blessed Sacrament School in Walpole, Massachusetts. In Orlando, Florida, she taught third, seventh, and eighth graders at St. John Vianney School. Later, she led St. John Vianney School for 21 years as its revered principal. Under her guidance, the school earned the highly regarded Blue Ribbon School of Excellence award from the U.S. Department of Education, an award that recognizes both outstanding student achievement and a curriculum meeting the needs of all students.

Speaking for many, one St. John Vianney School parent expressed her deep affection and appreciation for Sister Elizabeth Murphy by saying, "Sister was the reason we chose SJV and stayed at SJV. She was such a force to be reckoned with and oh so much love!" Another recalled that "She knew every student's name and who their parents were. Her ability to make someone feel special was a gift." A teacher at the school spoke of her gratitude that "Sister Elizabeth Murphy made a huge impact on my life and on so many others. I'll never forget the day I met her. . . . I instantly knew I loved her. She was a truly amazing woman. She was strong, feisty, hilarious, loving, and my mentor."

In 2012, when she received the Bishop Dorsey Award for Distinguished Service to Catholic Education, Sister Elizabeth said, "My life has been enriched and filled to overflowing. I give thanks to God for calling me to be his servant. My heart sings for joy." Our hearts overflow with gratitude for the rich blessings that Sister Elizabeth Patricia Murphy's wisdom, ministry, and example have given to young people and to us all. She lived as she encouraged her students to live: "May the Christ in you reach out and touch the Christ in all you meet."

Mass of Christian Burial will be held at Our Lady of Angels on Friday, July 9. Viewing at 9:30 A.M. Followed by Mass at 11 A.M. Burial will be in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.

