

Sister Helen Ann Gaidos, OSF

Professed 1949

*"... the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness,
and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8*



Describing the guiding principle of her life, Sister Helen Ann Gaidos quoted Micah 6:8. And in all she did, she showed her desire to do justice, love goodness, and walk humbly with her God. Sister Helen Ann—formerly Sister John Andre—passed away at her home in Assisi House on October 8, 2022, after 73 years as a professed Sister of St. Francis.

While she was growing up, Sister Helen, her parents—Andrew and Anna—and her six siblings were members of St. Gertrude Parish (now St. Cecilia's) in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, where Sister Helen attended Lebanon Catholic High School. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia in 1947 and professed her first vows in 1949. Sister Helen earned a Bachelor of Science in management from Northeastern University and a Master of Science in hospital and health administration from Xavier University.

Sister Helen's first ministry was as a teacher at Sacred Heart School in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Then at St. Joseph Hospital in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, she herself became a student as she prepared for her healthcare ministry. That ministry began at St. Francis Hospital in Wilmington, Delaware, where she served as a supervisor of radiologic technology. At St. Francis Hospital in Trenton, New Jersey, she continued to minister in radiology. Returning to the Diocese of Allentown, she served for 13 years as a supervisor of radiology for Reading's St. Joseph Hospital. Sharing her knowledge with students, she became a professor and director of the radiology program at Mercer County Community College, Trenton. Further using her knowledge and experience in behalf of others, she next served for 16 years as the CEO and president of St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton, Oregon.

Equally gifted in parish ministry, Sister Helen was for seven years the director of religious education for the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Cornwall, Pennsylvania, in the Diocese of Harrisburg. Also in the Harrisburg diocese, she volunteered for St. Benedict Parish in Lebanon and St. Paul the Apostle Church in Annville. During her 18 years in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Sister Helen ministered as a volunteer for Kimberton's St. Basil Parish and in local house ministry and caregiving at St. Basil the Great Convent in Phoenixville. Beginning in 2019, she served in prayer ministry in Assisi House.

Sister Louise Quinn is one of many to describe Sister Helen as notably versatile and widely talented. Sister Louise notes the breadth of Sister Helen's ministries and her excellence and devotion in each of these, from radiology technician to hospital president, from eucharistic minister to comforter for the sick and for residents of nursing homes. She was also a wonderful cook, as Sister Louise shares, loved her hometown of Lebanon and her Pennsylvania Dutch roots, and was devoted to her family. In addition, she enjoyed music, games and puzzles, reading, walking, and spending time at the beach.

Reflecting on her life in the congregation, Sister Helen wrote, "From the beginning of my life as a Sister of St. Francis, I have been very happy and content: no regrets and would do it over again. I enjoyed teaching radiologic technology students, and they became very successful in their chosen field. The many opportunities in the healthcare system helped me grow in compassion and understanding of humankind." On another occasion, she wrote that being a Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia "has been a very rewarding experience, providing an opportunity to further develop and grow in my personal relationship with Jesus while serving the people of God. My ministry experiences have added to my own growth."

Asked to consider her gifts, she acknowledged, "Others know me as caring, generous, and hope filled. My students will remember me for inspiring them to be dedicated, compassionate caregivers." Sister Helen Ann Gaidos, all who have had the blessing of knowing you are deeply grateful for you. Thank you for the endless ways in which you showed justice and kindness, loved goodness, and walked humbly with your God.

*All services will be held at Assisi House on Tuesday, October 18, and will be livestreamed.
A Christian Wake Service will begin at 9:30 A.M., followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M.
These services will be livestreamed. Burial will be in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.*