



Sister Helen Mary Reynolds, OSF

Professed 1958

The mission of teaching is "to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful." Pope Francis



After a lifetime of sharing truth, goodness, and beauty with generations of students and countless others, Sister Helen Mary Reynolds passed away in Assisi House on November 7, 2022. She had been a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 64 years.

Sister Helen Mary grew up near Baltimore, Maryland, where she graduated from The Catholic High School of Baltimore. She and her parents—Helen and William—and her six siblings were members of Saint Paul Parish. Sister Helen Mary earned a Bachelor of Science in education from Villanova University and a Master of Arts in religious studies from St. Charles Seminary.

Before entering the congregation in 1956, she served as a stenographer for Bingham Brothers, a company that supplied printers' rollers. As a Sister of St. Francis, Sister Helen Mary ministered for 50 years in elementary education, including more than half that time at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) in Morton, Pennsylvania. She also taught in Philadelphia's St. Benedict, Our Lady of Consolation, and Our Lady


of Mount Carmel Schools and at Sacred Heart School in Allentown, Pennsylvania. From 2008 until her death, Sister Helen Mary ministered in prayer and hospitality in Assisi House.

News of Sister Helen Mary's passing has brought an outpouring of fond memories and of gratitude to her for the lifelong gifts she gave her students. She was not only greatly admired and appreciated; she was also deeply loved. Those who knew Sister Helen Mary as their teacher express their appreciation through descriptions such as these: "loved by so many people," "sweet and loving," "one of my favorite memories," "such a kind woman," "sweet soul—80 kids in the class," "a wonderful example of faith and compassion," "such a kind and gentle soul," and "so lovable." One former pupil writes, "I never forgot her kindness." Another addresses Sister Helen Mary directly: "You were an amazing teacher and you were always so kind to your students."

Other tributes include, "Love and think of you often," and "Love you, Sister Helen. I will never forget your sweet, twinkling blue eyes and kind smile." Her students even sought to extend their time with her beyond the schoolday: "We would invite Sister Helen Mary to join us on all our Girl Scout field trips when she taught at OLPH." Sister Deborah Krist, who knew Sister Helen Mary at OLPH, shares recollections that are similar to her students': "She was well loved for her gentle and patient ways with the children. One thing she was known for was that she started the Nativity play in the fourth grade, and it continued on for many years. Before the pandemic, the children from OLPH would present it to the sisters at Assisi House."

In her own reflections about her life, Sister Helen Mary wrote, "Being a Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia has enriched me. I am especially grateful for the many opportunities to help me grow in the knowledge of my faith and the spiritual experiences offered to me. Those with whom I lived helped me to appreciate the wealth of riches in my life. Ministering to the students and their sharing with me have afforded me much joy." In addition to her ministries and love for her students and congregation, Sister Helen Mary's interests included reading—especially biographies and memoirs—solving crossword puzzles, and watching good mystery stories.

Through her kind and loving manner, her wisdom and understanding, and her devotion to each of her many hundreds of students, Sister Helen Mary Reynolds has given those students, all whose lives they in turn have touched, and everyone with the blessing of knowing her a gift beyond measure filled with truth, goodness, and beauty.



All services will be held in Assisi House on Wednesday, November 16, 2022, and will be livestreamed. A Christian Wake Service will be held at 9:30 A.M. Mass of Christian Burial will follow at 11 A.M., with burial in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.

