



## *Sister Elizabeth Mary Murphy, OSF*

### *Professed 1952*

*"I don't want to end up simply having visited this world." Mary Oliver*



Sister Elizabeth Mary Murphy, OSF, passed away on January 10, 2023. Throughout her 71 years as a professed Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia, she joyfully witnessed to her Franciscan charism and faith. Sister Elizabeth, better known as Lilly, entered the congregation in 1949 and professed her first vows in 1952. Sister Lilly shared her wisdom, generous spirit, and kindness with all she met, every day and in each of her many ministries.

Elizabeth Mary Murphy was born in Dublin, Ireland. She and her parents, William and Anne, eight brothers and three sisters, attended Most Precious Blood Parish in Dublin. Sister Lilly had a great admiration for her mother who raised her and her 11 siblings on her own after her father passed when she was just nine. Coming from a very "Holy family", Sister Lilly once wrote, "The framework for this Franciscan way began in my home in Ireland." Arriving in the U.S., she went on to earn a BA in English from Neumann University and a master's in religious studies from Villanova University. Later she received certification in spiritual direction from the Jesuit Center in Ireland.

Sister Lilly began her ministry with the Sisters of St. Francis in education in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, teaching at a number of schools including: St. Elizabeth School and St. Benedict School, Philadelphia; St. Stanislaus School, Lansdale; St. Ignatius School, Yardley; Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, Doylestown; and Immaculate Conception School, Marcus Hook. She also taught at Holy Ghost School in Bethlehem and Sts. Peter & Paul School in Lehighton.

In the early 80s, Sister Lilly changed focus and began to minister in parish/pastoral ministry and spiritual direction ministering to the people at San Damiano Parish, Langhorne; St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Bensalem; and St. John Fisher Parish in Boothwyn. She was the first pastoral associate at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Doylestown and still had friends from this parish many years later. Sister Lilly once wrote, "I spent my life as a teacher, hospital visitor comforting the sick, and doing retreat days with the people of the parish. I had a deep love for those who came to me for help. I had a passion for all I did as a Sister of St. Francis."

Sister Lilly spent 16 years in her native Ireland, where she served for 11 years as a counselor at Cuan Mhuire in both Athy and Arus. She also served in community outreach at St. James Resource Center and in parish ministry at her home parish of Most Precious Blood in Dublin, as well as volunteered for three years at Camino Drug Project in Dublin. Sister Lilly noted that, "The opportunities for spiritual growth through these ministries have been many."

When she returned to the Philadelphia area, she volunteered at the Franciscan Spiritual Center and Assisi House in Aston, as well as at St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne. In a *Good News* article about this ministry, Sister Lilly was quoted, "The spiritual care of these people is very important to me. . . I live each day as well as I can live it with the knowledge that I am embraced by a God who really loves me." Her good friend, Sister Jean Rupertus said, "I lived and ministered with Lilly and experienced her giving all she could to those with whom and to whom she ministered." Beginning in 2020, Sister Lilly served in prayer and hospitality ministry in Assisi House, where she was living at the time of her death.

Reflecting on her life as a Sister of St. Francis and on her own gifts, Sister Lilly shared, "I will always be grateful to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for my growth as a kind, caring, and loving human being. I love this Franciscan community to which I belong. My being overflows with gratitude for all the blessings I have received." One such blessing is that of her sisters and close friends including Sister Marie Patrice Feeney, a friend for nearly 70 years. Sister Lilly wrote, "I have no family in the U.S., but Sister Patrice's family have been my family since the 50s." Sister Patrice said of her friend, "Lilly once gave me a framed photo with the inscription, 'Friends are the family we choose for ourselves.' When she gave it to me, she said, 'never let anyone or anything separate us.' I have treasured this for years." Sister Patrice remembers Lilly's spirit and bubbly, fun personality, noting, "She was the opposite of me, but we had such fun together. She had a great spirit."

News of Sister Lilly's passing has brought an outpouring of loving appreciation. Sister Jean remembers her as "a beautiful and unique, loving and compassionate, yet bold, courageous and outspoken woman. My life has been enriched by her presence. I will always hold her in my heart as a friend and a sister." Sister Lilly's life and service to others certainly left an impact on those around her. Sister Donna Roccio refers to the quote from Mary Oliver, "Lilly definitely did more than just visit this world." All who have had the blessing of knowing Sister Lilly will treasure her memory in their hearts and the joyful gift of her example in their lives.

*All services will be held at Assisi House on Friday, January 20, 2023.*

*Viewing will begin at 9:30 A.M., followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M. The services will be livestreamed.*

*Interment of ashes will be in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.*

