



## *Sr. Nancy Crossen, OSF Professed 1949*

*"Stay in love with life and that will guide you to everything."  
John O'Donohue*



Sister Nancy Crossen, OSF, (94) died in Assisi House on February 7. She was born in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, in the Pittsburgh diocese to William and Nancy Crossen—one of six children in the family. The devout Catholic family were members of St. Coleman Parish in Turtle Creek. A graduate of St. Thomas High School in Braddock, Nancy entered the Sisters of St. Francis in 1946 and professed her first vows in 1949. During her 74 years of ministry, Nancy served primarily in education—ministries that took her to the Dioceses of Baltimore, Wilmington, Mobile, Charleston, and Philadelphia.

Sister Nancy was a steadfast and committed educator especially with those who are poor and on the margins of society. Her dedication and enthusiasm led her to serving people of all backgrounds, ethnicity, and race throughout the East Coast, including the Irish Travelers in rural Augusta, South Carolina. She was a simple person, not in the limelight, a "hidden star" one might say, but one whose steady presence has been a beacon of light to all those whom she served. One such example of this was at St. Anthony School in Mobile, Alabama—later named Most Pure Heart of Mary. The school, which was originally opened by our sisters in 1902 exclusively for African American students, was suffering and in danger of closing. Sister Nancy, Sister Shirley Boucher, and Sister Patricia Real began to minister at the school in 1993 and after a rough start and a lot of hard work and dedication, things began to change. "Our children measure up with others in the diocese," Sister Nancy said in a *Good News* article about the ministry, "That wasn't the case before." Later in the article, Sister Nancy expresses a sentiment that encompasses who she was as both a sister and educator—caring and giving. "When we can see in the children's eyes that they have discovered the excitement of learning and achieving success, we know what we are doing is working." Upon hearing of Sister Nancy's death, people who knew her referred to her as "a great educator and spiritual guide," "a kind and dignified woman," and "a faithful servant."

Sister Nancy also had excellent administrative skills and has used her skills effectively both in education and in congregational administration on the provincial level as both coordinator of ministry and vice provincial. Sister Nancy was instrumental in many congregational initiatives as well as in strengthening the quality of education and creativity among our sisters, school faculty, and students. In 2012, Sister Nancy received the Franciscan Federation Award for "Releasing Energies to Love: Creative Fidelity in the Church." She also coauthored a workbook, "Reading the Problem with Math Problems," which was presented at the International Reading Conference in California.

Underlying Nancy's gifts and her varied contributions to education was her belief in and ability to live out her Franciscan vocation. Reflecting on her life as a Sister of St. Francis, Nancy wrote, "I have loved my life and enjoyed everywhere I have been in ministry. Much of my educational time has been with students who were poor in underfunded schools. I found this a marvelous experience which has taught me so much." Poet John O'Donohue wrote, "Stay in love with life and that will guide you to everything." Nancy, you have served with great love and creative fidelity to the Church, guided by our God who is Love! Rest now in God's deep love for you and in an eternity of peace that knows no end!

*All services will be held at Assisi House on Tuesday, February 14, 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.*

