

Remembering



Julia Mary Farley, CSJ

February 26, 1926 – December 2, 2017

Mary Jane Farley was born in Chicago, the youngest of six children born to Julia Banks of Chicago, and Thomas Farley of Forest Park, Illinois. Her brothers and sisters were, Thomas, Julia, Margaret, Rose, Robert, James and finally Mary Jane. Being the youngest in an Irish Catholic family, Mary Jane thought a lot about entering religious life some day. She was further impressed when her brother, James, entered the seminary. But when World War II broke out, he enlisted in the Marines and was one of 7,100 casualties in the Battle of Guadalcanal. In 1946 the family moved to Los Angeles, after Mary Jane graduated from Notre Dame High School. She then worked as a secretary for five years to help her family financially.

Sister recalled, "I became acquainted with the Sisters of St.

Joseph and finally asked them to take me in." Mary Jane entered on September 15, 1951. She received the habit and her religious name, Sister Julia Mary, on St. Joseph's Day, 1952. Two years later, on March 19, 1954 Sister made her first profession. Her final profession was on August 15, 1959 at St. Mary's House of Studies. In 2012 Sister celebrated her 60th Jubilee.

Sister's first assignment after profession was in the Admitting Office in Daniel Freeman Hospital from 1954-1959. Who knew at that time, a few years later she would be the Assistant Administrator of the same hospital? Before assuming administrative positions, she studied at Mount St. Mary's College, graduating in 1960, and UCLA, where she received a Master of Science degree in Public Health in 1962.

Sister Julia Mary's first appointment as administrator was to St. Mary's in Tucson for nine years. She also served as administrator at Our Lady of Lourdes in Pasco and Daniel Freeman Hospitals in Inglewood and Marina del Rey. For the majority of her religious life Sister served in our hospitals, and in provincial government as Regional Superior for the Northwest and on the Provincial Council, or Apostolic Board, representing Health Care. Those who worked with her in various settings said she could do almost anything, quietly and efficiently, with great love and respect.

In 1983 Sister joined the staff of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, working at Angel's Flight, a shelter and outreach ministry to runaway and homeless youth in Hollywood. A year later, she founded Good Shepherd Center for Homeless Women. The Center serves more than 3,500 homeless women and children each year. One employee who worked there said, "We saw miracles there every day." A former Good Shepherd resident said, "You took a broken

I person and made a student, mother, grandmother and friend. You kept me going and believed in me when I didn't. Thank you." During Sister Julia Mary's twenty-six years, Good Shepherd Center grew from one emergency shelter program to include five residences for homeless mothers and children. With the completion of the three-phased Women's Village in 2008, Sister Julia Mary and her staff realized her dream of building transitional and long-term housing, offering a wide array of services for the women and children who came for guidance toward independent living.

She wrote, "My greatest honor is being a Sister of St. Joseph

and having the opportunity to serve Christ in his people. What greater honor can there be!"

In 1990 Sister and the staff of Good Shepherd Center received a letter from President George Bush naming them as one of the first recipients to receive his 'Thousand Points of Light' award for outstanding excellence in service to the Los Angeles community. The letter stated, "The true measure of any individual is found in the way he or she treats others--and the person who regards others with love, respect and charity holds a priceless treasure in his or her heart."

In 1993 Sister was named one of fifteen 'Women Pioneers' by the city of Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women, "for her outstanding contributions to the Los Angeles community and her lifelong dedication to the poor and needy."

In 2002 Sister received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Loyola Marymount. While listing her accomplishments as hospital administrator, the award especially honored her work for the women and children of Los Angeles.

In 2007 Sister Julia Mary was featured on a Life and Times TV report. The reporter chronicled her work with the homeless in Los Angeles and referred to her as the Mother Teresa of Los Angeles. Msgr. John P. Languille, Executive Director of Los Angeles Catholic Welfare Bureau wrote, "Sister is a delight to work with." William R. Dahlman, President Good Shepherd Center Advisory Board wrote, "She inspired all of us to reach out with dignity and love to women and children in need. Her loving, indomitable spirit set the tone for this remarkable program."

Sister was honored on November 20, 2014 on the 30th Anniversary of Good Shepherd Center. Msgr. Gregory Cox, Director of Catholic Charities thanked Sister "for her genius, leadership, and devotion to homeless women and for insuring that the center was a home where all were welcome and acknowledged as part of the family."

In September 2007, Sister Julia Mary moved to Holy Family Community to continue her lifelong ministry of prayer and witness.

Sister Julia Mary was first and foremost a woman of prayer and dedicated to community life. She was a delightful person to live and work with, doing all tasks without fanfare. Sister was cordial and humble in assisting others. She possessed a lively but quiet sense of humor, and was an uplifting presence for all.

Sister Julia Mary's innumerable gifts of mind and spirit blessed many. She was charming and generous, and most importantly, was able to endure most storms with tranquil equilibrium. She was filled with an inexhaustible tender love, and became a haven of peace and joy for many. She was grateful for the loving care given to her by the Holy Family staff, and the end of life care provided by Vitas staff members. She died quietly in her sleep.

And now dear Sister Julia Mary, may you enter into the everlasting peace and joy that comes from loving God and the dear neighbor without reserve. ✞

~ Written by Sister Mary Sevilla, CSJ and Sister Frances Baker, CSJ

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*I will hold the Christlight for you
in the night time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you want to hear.*

- The Servant Song, by Richard Gillard

