

Remembering



Regina McLaughlan, CSJ
July 17, 1922 – February 26, 2018

On July 17, 1922, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, James and Mary Genevieve, (called Jenny) Thompson McLaughlan welcomed their seventh child, a daughter, whom they named Regina. Although her father, James, had been born in Donegal, Ireland, he and Jenny raised their family in Philadelphia Jenny's birthplace. Regina recalled a loving family life with brothers, Edward, Paul, James, Joseph, and Frank, and sisters, Mary and Florence. About her family, Regina writes: "I am one of eight children, five boys and three girls. All three girls became Sisters. Florence (Sister Agnes James) and I entered at old St. Mary's on Slauson. Mary became a Franciscan and, always in weak health, died six years after receiving the habit."

The family left Philly to move to Los Angeles when Regina was six

months old where they settled in St. John Evangelist Parish. There they met the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who taught in the parish school. Again, in Regina's own words: "I've known the Sisters of St. Joseph all my life. My older brothers and sister were taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia. One of my cousins entered that Community. My cousin, Sister Edna Mary, entered after she graduated from St. Mary's Academy. She was followed by her two sisters. My own sister entered the community when I was eleven."

Regina followed the example of her sister and entered the Sisters of St. Joseph on September 15, 1939. Six months later, she received the habit and religious name, Sister Mary Edward. She pronounced her temporary vows on March 19, 1942 and made her final

profession of vows on August 15, 1946.

Sister Mary Edward was an educator par excellence. She spent 56 years in elementary education - 44 in Los Angeles and the other 12 in San Francisco, San Diego, Idaho, and Oxnard, teaching in every grade from kindergarten to eighth grade! From 1956 to 1975, she ministered as administrator/Principal at St. Anthony's in Oxnard, at Ascension, at St. Eugene's, at St. Jerome's and at Holy Cross Middle School in Los Angeles. The majority of her educational ministry was in inner city schools where her inclusive love made her beloved by faculty, parents as well as students. Sometime during these years, and in response to the invitation from Vatican II, Sister returned to her baptismal name, Regina.

Following almost 25 years in Administration, Sister Regina returned to the classroom. Then, in 1993, she was invited to become co-principal with Sister Dorothy Denise Tracy at St. Joan of Arc School in Los Angeles. After Sister Dorothy Denise's death, Regina remained on as Principal until 1998.

The word "retirement" made no sense for Regina - perhaps other than "uncompensated ministry"! In 1998, while remaining in local community at St. Joan of Arc Community, she began her years of Community Service - in the Development Office at Carondelet Center, and as Regional for Holy Family Community. This latter role held special meaning for Regina. She wrote:

"I loved what I did. I am especially grateful for the time I spent with the sisters in Holy Family Community.

They really helped me grow and deepen my own CSJ charism."

Not only was Regina delighted with the ministry itself, but she became very close to the other regionals then serving from 2001-2007. After the regular Colloquium, she and her fellow regionals would gather for further conversation and laughter at Polly's Restaurant in Santa Monica. Then, despite the closure of Polly's, the regionals searched for and found another gathering place, Carrow's. Even after completing their terms as Regionals, Regina felt that the group should continue to gather. Why stop! This supportive gathering lasted about three more years!

Perhaps Regina's greatest gift to us was showing us how to live into her "golden years" with such graciousness. At St. Joan of Arc Community, she lived with Sisters Mary Brigid, Ellen Joseph and Pat Arnold, and presented all of us with rich examples of how to live into our eighties in local community, serving the "dear neighbor" in each other as well as in others. Praying together, enjoying each other's company at dinner (which they each took turns preparing), meeting weekly for sharing of the heart, joining for outings and community celebrations --- all these made for a local community of one heart. This warmth and inclusivity was evident not just to CSJ's but to anyone who rang the front doorbell! In 2012, it became necessary that the sisters vacate the convent and they collectively, as a community, made the decision to move to Holy Family Community.

Still in ministry, Regina attended to her sisters as Support Staff until 2015. Thereafter, Regina agreed to

a necessary heart surgery to replace valves. She entered St. John's hospital having signed a Do not Resuscitate order. In the process of the surgery, Regina's heart stopped. She was resuscitated. For some time Regina mourned this occurrence, but eventually accepted her life's continuation as God's holy will. With characteristic devotion and generosity, Regina continued to love and care for family, friends, and her beloved sisters. She showed up with a smile on her face despite physical weakness or pain.

Regina died peacefully after a brief period of intense suffering from a fractured femur. She was surrounded by many who cared for her, and admired her extraordinary wholehearted engagement in life. Now she most certainly enjoys eternal rest, close to God, the giver and sustainer of her vocation to the CSJ's, the congregation of the great love of God.

~ Written by
Sister Adrienne Clare Pereira CSJ

