Sister Jean Gilbon, SHCJ

Educator, Administrator

October 10, 1929 – February 25, 2015

Rosemont, Pennsylvania – Sister Jean Gilbon, SHCJ, who was a Sister of the Holy Child Jesus for 56 years, died of cardiac failure at Holy Child Center, Rosemont, PA, on Wednesday, February 25, 2015. She was 86.

Born and raised in Peekskill, NY, Sister Jean was the daughter of Harry and Blanche (Goderre) Gilbon. She attended the local public schools and after high school, studied at The Katherine Gibbs Secretarial and Business School from 1947-1949. While working in the corporate world, she became friends with a woman who introduced her to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Sister Jean often shared that this friend “brought me back to God and led the way to entering the Society in 1956.” Sister Jean professed her final vows in 1964 and became well known by the name Mother Mary Francine Gilbon.

Sister Jean began her teaching ministry at St. Mary’s School in Melrose, MA; St. Ignatius School in Chicago, IL; and Sts. Peter and Paul and Our Lady of Lourdes in New York City. In 1966, Sister Jean started an eight-year ministry at St. Elizabeth Parish in New York City, where she served as a teacher, principal, and administrator. She then worked in the American Province’s finance office until 1979, when she became the business manager of Connelly School of the Holy Child in Potomac, MD. In 1985, the Archdiocese of New York invited Sister Jean to serve in the Archdiocese’s Office of Criminal Ministries. She worked in prison ministry for 14 years.

After retirement in 1999, Sister Jean volunteered at Holy Child Academy in Old Westbury, NY, for several years. In February 2015, she moved from the Holy Child community in Rye, NY, to Holy Child Center in Rosemont, PA, to receive additional care.

Sister Jean earned a bachelor’s degree in secondary education from Fordham University in 1968 and a master’s degree in business administration from Pace University in 1977. She served on the board of trustees at Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child in Summit, NJ; Holy Child Academy in Drexel Hill, PA; and St. Leonard’s Academy in Philadelphia, PA.

Friends and family were invited to a prayer service of remembrance on Monday, March 2, at 4:00 p.m., and to a memorial Mass on Tuesday, March 3, at 11:00 a.m., at New Sharon Chapel, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA. Preceding Mass, friends and family were welcome to visit at 10:00 a.m. Funeral arrangements were handled by Donohue’s Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA 19010.