



Society of the Holy Child Jesus  
AMERICAN PROVINCE

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**Elizabeth Gehrman, SHCJ  
(Mother Mary Gemma)  
November 2, 1927 – December 2, 2017  
Teacher, Administrator**

Rosemont, Pennsylvania – Elizabeth Gehrman, SHCJ, who was a Sister of the Holy Child Jesus for 68 years, died on Saturday, December 2, 2017. She was 90.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, PA, Sister Elizabeth was the daughter of the late August and Johanna (Buehelle) and sister to Frederick Gehrman and Henrietta Leonard.

Sister Elizabeth first met the Holy Child Sisters while attending West Catholic Girls High School in Philadelphia. The Holy Child Sisters' spirit and joy led Sister Elizabeth to join the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1946. She made her final vows in 1954 and became well known by the religious name Mother Mary Gemma.



*Elizabeth Gehrman, SHCJ, working in Province Archives, 2015*

Sister Elizabeth's educational ministry spanned more than five decades. She was first missioned to Saint Mary School in Melrose, MA (1949-1955) and Saint Edward School in Philadelphia, PA (1955-1957). In Portland, OR, she taught at Saint Rose School (1957-1960); Saint Rita School (1960-1961 and 1968-1970); and Saint Charles School (1961-1968). She moved to Pasadena, CA, where she taught at Assumption B.V.M. School for three years (1970-1973).

In 1974, Sister Elizabeth returned to the east coast where she lived and ministered for the next four decades. She taught at Holy Spirit School in Sharon Hill, PA (1974-1986) and Annunciation School in Washington, D.C. (1987-2002).

At several places where Sister Elizabeth had taught, she also served as principal, including Saint Rita School (1968-1970); Holy Spirit School (1978-1986); and Annunciation School (1987-1988).

In 2002, Sister Elizabeth retired from teaching and began living in community at Saint Eugene Parish in Primos, PA, where she took care of day-to-day responsibilities of the Sisters' community and became active in parish ministry. She also worked part-time in the Province Health Office in Drexel Hill.

Sister Elizabeth was involved with the Sisters' EcoSpirituality Group and even named the local

*For this is our mission: to help others to believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world, and to rejoice in God's presence.*

offshoot, *The Evergreens*. She brought her increasing knowledge and practicality to these meetings. Terri MacKenzie, SHCJ, wrote of her appreciation of Sister Elizabeth's support of ten years to this group and said, "Elizabeth could always and immediately find the good in everyone and everything."

After moving to a Holy Child community in Bryn Mawr, PA, she volunteered in the Archives where the American Province archivist Roseanne McDougall, SHCJ, said that Sister Elizabeth was always willing to serve in any way and, by suggesting the mid-morning coffee break, created a welcome sense of community.

Kathy Cordes, SHCJ, shared that Sister Elizabeth "was so grateful for everyone's care and concern and always trusted that God would take care of her."

Sister Elizabeth earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education at Villanova University in 1957 and a Master's degree in Education at University of Portland, OR, in 1964. She continued her studies in history, theology, and math at University of Portland, University of San Francisco, and Maryhurst College in Portland, respectively.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to Society of the Holy Child Jesus – American Province, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA 19010, or make a gift online at [www.shcj.org/american/donate](http://www.shcj.org/american/donate).