



Society of the Holy Child Jesus
AMERICAN PROVINCE

1341 Montgomery Avenue
Rosemont, Pennsylvania 19010
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www.shcj.org/american

Pauline McShain, SHCJ
June 10, 1928 – March 8, 2019
Teacher, Administrator

Rosemont, PA -- Pauline “Polly” McShain, SHCJ, who was a Holy Child Sister for 70 years, died on Friday, March 8, 2019, at Bryn Mawr Hospital in Bryn Mawr, PA. She was 90.

Sister Polly, the only child of John and Mary (Horstmann) McShain, was born in Philadelphia. Her father owned and operated one of America’s leading construction companies.



Sister Polly’s mother graduated from St. Leonard’s Academy, a Holy Child school in Philadelphia, PA, and was among the early students at the newly-opened Rosemont College, also founded by the Holy Child Sisters. Near the end of her sophomore year, Mary left college to marry John McShain. Together, Mr. and Mrs. McShain shared a deep faith in the Catholic Church and were major philanthropists.

Sister Polly inherited the giving spirit of her parents. Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ, shared that “Sister Polly loved both her extended family and her Holy Child community with great affection and loyalty; she dedicated her life to the service of others in diverse ways both nationally and internationally, continually adapting to the calls of a rapidly changing church and world.”

In 1934, Sister Polly followed the family tradition and attended St. Leonard’s through 9th Grade. She graduated from Holy Child Academy in Suffern, NY. Sister Polly entered the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1946 and made her first and final vows in 1949 and 1954, respectively. She chose the religious name Mother John Mary for both parents, who she loved dearly. The McShains constructed Holy Child Chapel in Rosemont for their daughter’s first profession. Today, the Chapel remains the center of prayer, worship, and gathering for the Holy Child community.

Sister Polly taught at several schools throughout her religious life, including Oak Knoll of the Holy Child in Summit, NJ, (1949-1952); Holy Child School at Rosemont in Rosemont, PA (1952-1956); Rosemont Senior School (1956-1966); and Connelly School of the Holy Child in Potomac, MD (1969-1971 and 1973-1976). Sister Polly was then given the challenging responsibilities of formation during the years of renewal (1966-1969), first as an assistant and then as novice director. From 1971-1973, Sister Polly was missioned to West Africa, where she lectured at the National Institute of Religious Education in Lagos, Nigeria.



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Following her work as a pastoral minister at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in White Plains, NY (1976-1978), she was appointed Associate Vicar for Religious in the Diocese of Bridgeport, CT, (1978-1981). She then served as Vicar for Religious in the Diocese of Newark, NJ, a post she held until 1986, when she was elected to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus' General Council and lived in Rome for six years (1986-1992). While serving on the Council, her father died in 1989.

As Mrs. McShain's health declined, Sister Polly spent more time at the family's home in Ireland, supervising her mother's care and managing the estate. After Mrs. McShain's death in 1998, Sister Polly moved to the Rosemont area, where she settled her parents' estate and gradually closed the John McShain Charities, Inc. She served as president of the McShain Charities from 1998-2000.

In the 2000s, Sister Polly volunteered at Siloam, a nonprofit organization in Philadelphia that serves people living with HIV, and at the Holy Child Sisters' archives. In 2013, Sister Polly moved to Holy Child Center where she continued to be an avid reader and engaged in world and Church events.

She is survived by many cousins whom she loved and cherished.

In addition to being awarded a Bachelor of Arts in English from Rosemont College in 1958, Sister Polly also earned a Master in Arts in Secondary Education from Villanova University in 1959; a Master of Arts in Religious Studies from Catholic University of America in 1971; and a Master of Science in Pastoral Counseling from Iona College in 1980.

Throughout her life, Sister Polly served on many boards and committees, including the Board of Trustees of Rosemont College; Board Member of Ireland's Heritage Preservation Foundation; Board of Trustees of St. Joseph Preparatory School; Chairman's Council, Philadelphia Museum of Art; and John McShain Biography Committee, Hagley Museum and Library.

Friends and family are invited to a Mass of Christian Burial on Saturday, March 16, at 11:00 a.m., at St. Thomas of Villanova, The Rosemont Chapel, 1229 E Lancaster Ave, Bryn Mawr, PA, 19010. Preceding Mass, friends, and family are welcome to attend the viewing from 9:45 – 11:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus – American Province, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA 19010, or donate online at www.shcj.org/american/donate.