



Society of the Holy Child Jesus
AMERICAN PROVINCE

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Florence Rice, SHCJ
December 5, 1935 – October 17, 2023
Teacher, Administrator, Pastoral Worker

Rosemont, Pennsylvania – Florence Rice, SHCJ, a Sister of the Holy Child Jesus for 67 years, died on Tuesday, October 17, 2023. She was 87.

While Sister Florence traveled far and wide and made fast friends wherever she ministered, she proudly considered herself a “Melrosian,” having been born, raised, and educated in Melrose, Massachusetts. Sister Florence attended grade school and high school at Saint Mary School, where she was taught by Holy Child Sisters. She entered the Society of the Holy Child Jesus immediately after high school in 1953 and made her final vows in 1961. She became well known by her religious name, Mother Mary St. Jude.



During her first 14 years of religious life, Sister Florence taught at Saint Edward School in Philadelphia (1956-58); Saint Elizabeth School (1962-65) and Our Lady of Lourdes (1966-68 and 1978-82) in New York City; and Saint Ignatius School in Chicago (1968-69). She also taught at her alma mater, Saint Mary School (1958-62 and 1965-66).

In 1970, Sister Florence was missioned to Chile to join the pioneering Holy Child Sisters at Santa Rosa School, Lo Barnechea. During her stay, she witnessed the political trauma of the military coup and its impact on the nation’s citizens. Because of these difficult times, she grew closer to the people.

In 1978, Sister Florence returned to the United States and underwent surgery to remove a brain tumor. She eventually became director of religious education at Saint Mary Villa for Children in Ambler, Pennsylvania.

In 1985, Sister Florence eagerly returned to Chile, where she stayed for nearly six years. At the request of the local Chilean bishop, the Holy Child Sisters, including Sister Florence, helped to form a new parish in the Southern Zone of Santiago. The Chilean bishop gave the Sisters an old barley mill to fix up and use as their chapel. Within a year, the Sisters and the people who helped them form the parish had accomplished their goal. Sister Florence shared that this was one of her favorite ministries.

In 1991, Sister Florence moved to New York City and served at Cornelia Connelly Center, a new ministry of the Province. She taught Spanish and was the center’s receptionist.

After 13 years in New York City, Sister Florence relocated to Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, where she was a volunteer chaplain at Bryn Mawr Hospital and participated in the choir and RCIA program at Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish. The move to Bryn Mawr enabled her to spend time with her older sister Eleanor, also a Holy Child Sister, who suffered from Parkinson's disease. Sister Eleanor's death in 2007 was a great loss to Sister Florence.

In 2010, Sister Florence moved to Holy Child Center in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, and continued her ministries at Bryn Mawr Hospital and Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish for many more years. Until her death, she loved living in community at Holy Child Center.

Margaret Rogers, SHCJ, shared a very significant, vivid memory of Sister Florence from 2001 when they both lived in community at Dalton Center in New York City. Sister Florence offered to drive Sister Margaret to the hospital for a scheduled knee surgery, but Sister Margaret declined as she had already arranged transportation. When Sister Margaret arrived at the hospital and was being prepped for surgery, news came that planes had hit the Twin Towers. All patients who could walk were asked to leave so the hospital could prepare for the injured. Sister Margaret walked 16 blocks to Dalton Center, where she received the most gracious, loving welcome from Sister Florence. Thankfully,

Sister Florence earned a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from Villanova University in 1965 and a Master of Arts in Theology from Manhattan College in 1970.

Sister Florence joins her parents, Albert and Mary (Kennedy), her sisters, Eleanor Rice, SHCJ, and Marian Rice, and brother Al. She is survived by sister-in-law Wendy, nieces Judith and Suzanne, and nephew Michael and their families, and many devoted friends, including Suzanne Thiel and Eilise Rouse.

Friends and family are invited to a prayer service of remembrance on Sunday, October 22, at 4:00 p.m. and a Mass of Christian Burial on Monday, October 23, at 11:00 a.m., at Holy Child Chapel, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA, 19010. Preceding Mass, friends and family are welcome to attend the viewing at 10:00 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 made online at www.shcj.org/american/donate.