



## **Sister Mary Anne Katlack, SC**

Entered eternal life on February 20, 2022

I want to begin by thanking all of you who are here today to celebrate the life of Sister Mary Anne Katlack; to all of you who loved her so much, please know that her heart was always full of love for you. To know Sister Mary Anne was to love her and be loved by her.

Sister Mary Anne served most of her 65 years as a Sister of Charity in education – first at St. Peter’s Elementary School in New Brunswick, then at East Orange Catholic High School, at Mother Seton and at Marylawn of the Oranges. She also served in our community government before returning to Mother Seton in 2003 as our Campus Minister. Through this position, Sister Mary Anne inspired many of our students to become involved in social justice issues, community service and in numerous ways to serve the poor. For several years, she brought our girls each week to The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless to tutor young children after

school. Her Loaves and Fishes Club has collected and donated countless coats, blankets, towels, toiletries, socks, etc. to the poor in the Elizabeth area. For the past few years she has taken hundreds of sandwiches and bags of food to St. Joseph’s Social Service Center in Elizabeth every Monday. Most recently, she organized the collection of bedding for five family members being placed into housing through the Coalition in Elizabeth.

Her generosity knew no limits. She gave from her heart. She was very close to her family – first with her parents – Tom and Anna Katlack and her six siblings – Tom, Barbara, Judy, Lorraine, Joe and Stan, all of whom predeceased her. She experienced great sorrow as she helped to bury each of these beloved family members. She continued to attend to her 15 nieces and nephews and their children and their children. No holiday passed that she did not send each one a card with some cash. She was always there for them, and they loved her and depended on her as she became the matriarch of the family. Recently her nieces told me that when they were young children and were in need of some correction, their moms would threaten to call Aunt Mary Anne and that made them straighten out quickly. If not, they know a long talk with Aunt Mary Anne would follow! I do not believe that they could have loved her more!

Her love of our community was so evident in the many ways in which she served – in government, in many committees over the years, in enhancing liturgies for the community, in her volunteer work and in her genuine availability to help others. She took the time to send each sister in our retirement centers a birthday card each year!

Sister Mary Anne taught Social Studies in our school during the 1980’s always challenging the girls to not only know the history of the world but also to know their own personal history. She began the senior project of the girls making their own personal history books (a project which continues today). Many of our alums treasure their books to this day. When she returned in 2003 as Campus Minister, she challenged all to care for the poor. She prepared all of our prayer services and liturgies and was an integral part of our Annual Junior-Senior Retreat at Maris Stella.

Sister Mary Anne had a great love for babies and for children (and animals especially dogs). Children loved to be in her presence as she doted on them. Her face would light up as she made each one feel special. She volunteered to teach kindergarten children CCD at St. Helen’s Parish for several years. She loved to come home with precious stories about these little ones. For many summers, Sister Mary Anne volunteered at Camp Fatima, a camp for children with disabilities, and she loved these most special children with all her heart.

In addition to her own nieces and nephews, Mary Anne became Aunt Mary Anne to my five nephews and Godmother to one of them – Michael. When they lived in California and her family was in MN, we would fly out to visit each family and we enjoyed being with the kids so much.

She loved her time at East Orange Catholic and continued to attend their annual reunion each year. Facebook pages for EOCH, Camp Fatima and Mother Seton have been lighting up with comments of praise for her life, how much she meant to so many people. Pictures, stories, words of gratitude and love abound in these postings. Thank you to the alumnae of EOCH and MSR for all of your kind words and love for Sister Mary Anne. She is now your special angel in heaven!

A pillar of strength, a woman of faith, a woman of prayer, a wonderful mentor, the best teacher, someone “who made me who I am today,” a good and kind and holy person, and for me the very best friend that I could ever have been blessed with, I thank my God.

Rest in peace, Mary Anne.

Sister Jacquelyn Balasia, SC