



Sister Mary Clark, SC

Entered eternal life on July 20, 2022

Mary Clark was a true Vincentian Sister of Charity. When Vincent was first beginning his life's work, he would have loved to have Mary's spirit working with him. Both of them could look into the faces and eyes of the poor and know that more could be done.

Although Mary may have begun her teaching career thinking of it as a lifetime career, she came to realize that she wanted more during her time at Queen of Angels School in Newark. It was there that her faith journey began when Fr. Linder baptized her, and the seed of her vocation was birthed.

Soon after making her vows as a Sister of Charity, Mary taught at All Saints with Maeve, Julie, and Mary Lou—and she knew she was working with the poor. There remained a dream in Mary's spirit and as the kernel of that dream began to take shape, she began teaching in PS 22 where she met and worked with the four women who became her lifelong friends.

Mary realized that, for her, standing on the side of the poor meant helping young pregnant homeless women find a place of safety and some joy as their child was birthed. That dream became a reality when Mary opened The Mother Seton Home. Mary found a big old house in the poor run-down Lafayette section of Jersey City for the Home's location.

Mary went to court to allow each new mother to have a temporary home for herself and her child. Some women came from the streets and some from jail. Mary knew she had to run a strict program if the young ladies were to give the house a good reputation. She liked to talk about the night she was sitting alone in the street level room when she saw a girl running down the fire escape steps and out the gate. Mary locked the gate and waited for the escapee to return. When she returned, she realized she couldn't get back in, but Mary welcomed her back home and all ended well. For ten year, mothers and babies came and went and Mary's deep faith made it all happen.

Through the years the old house continued to need serious repairs, in addition to the changes in the licensing regulations for housing, and Mary's decline in physical and mental health. It became apparent that the precious Mother Seton Home could not continue. Sister Deborah Humphreys, Mary's Counselor, was charged with bringing Mary to our Villa. That was not an easy task! Because of legal issues regarding the incorporation of the Home, the court had to get involved. That meant many trips to courthouse and lots of conversations. When the day came that the judge ordered Mary to go to the Villa, I wasn't sure that Mary would. Debbie tried to coax her and so did I, but it was her Jersey City teacher friend Barbara who was able to make it work. She opened the car door and shouted across the street, "Mary Clark come over here and get into this car" ... and she did! We were greeted warmly at the Villa and there began Mary's new and very different life. She always wanted to go back to the "hood" and get the scratch-off's that she so enjoyed, but it wasn't to be and so she was a good patient. One aide told me that knowing she would see Sister Mary's beautiful smile was one of the reasons she wanted to go to work. As the years have gone by Mary stopped smiling and closed those beautiful eyes and sank into her inner world. When God called, we knew she was ready. I'm sure there were many Vincent-spirited folks, our own beautiful sisters, her mother, and maybe even the young guy from the corner

scratch-off store waiting to greet her. I'm thinking he would say something like, "Welcome, yes, welcome Sister Mary, oh you did so much good—so very much good."

~ Sister Mary Walter Dwyer, SC