



Sister Mary Ellen Verdon

Entered eternal life on August 1, 2026

Welcome to our celebration of life for Mary Ellen. During the sharing of memories, we heard some beautiful words describing Mary Ellen's life and influence on so many family and friends.

It is a privilege for me to speak about Mary Ellen – our special connection: I first met Mary Ellen – almost 72 years ago we entered on September 6, 1954, and we have been friends ever since.

The last time I visited her we had a great time reminiscing about our yearly band reunions, our memories of family, days gone by and just remembering the “good old days”.

Sister Mary Ellen (formerly Sister Michael Julia) was born on August 12, 1936, in Jersey City, NJ to Michael and Julia Verdon. Both of Mary Ellen's parents were born in County Mayo, Ireland, and she was very proud of her heritage.

Mary Ellen attended Saint Aloysius High School in Jersey City and loved her hometown (God's country)!!

Mary Ellen had two siblings, her brothers Tom and Jack who predeceased her. We are happy that her sister-in-law Helen and her nieces, nephews, cousins and family members from the Verdon and Lynch families, who were so loving and caring of Mary Ellen, are with us today.

In 1956, Mary Ellen was sent to the Hospital of Saint Raphael School of Nursing in New Haven, Connecticut to pursue her studies to become a nurse, and later to study for her master's degree at Catholic University, Washington, DC.

In 1963, the Congregation put out a call for sisters to volunteer for a mission in Bolivia, South America. A long way from Jersey City and Convent Station. Mary Ellen was one of the four Sisters chosen to minister to the needs of the indigenous people of Caranavi.

After serving 11 years in Bolivia, she returned to serve as the Director of Nursing for Saint Anne Villa. After a few years at the Villa, she studied at Seton Hall University to become a Clinical Specialist. Subsequently, she ministered at Essex County Hospital, Verona for approximately 18 years.

In 1998, Mary Ellen's life journey went in a totally different direction. Responding to a desire for a totally contemplative way of living, she entered the Karmel Kloster in Norway and remained there for a year. The year at the cloister was special for Mary Ellen and she never regretted her decision. She always said it was a very enriching experience. She remained in contact with the Sisters there after her return.

These are some of the facts about Mary Ellen's life but there is so much more.

When I asked some friends for words to describe Mary Ellen, they said she was kind, positive, calm, caring, steadfast, knowledgeable, charitable, willing to help, always reaching out to others and fun-loving. These qualities were often manifested in the prayer group that Mary Ellen and Anne Pressler hosted at their home in Parsippany. Comprised of Sisters and lay associates and friends, these people were very attentive to Mary Ellen in the years when her health and ability to travel beyond the walls of her house became a challenge.

Another love of Mary Ellen's was Maris Stella where she and Ann Pressler cooked for many years especially during the Contemplative retreat. Her friend, Fr. Carl Arrico, who conducted these retreats, is with us today. When I was the Administrator at Maris Stella, Mary Ellen would often call to check on me – especially if there was a storm. Her calls were deeply appreciated.

Sister Mary Ellen was a woman of Charity who touched the lives of many people. These last few years were difficult and challenging for her. Thankfully, in her neighborhood in Parsippany, she had a core group of neighbors who cared and looked out for her. I would especially like to thank Michele and Glenn who were so faithful to her both there and when she moved to McAuley Health Center in Watchung.

It has been a long journey for Mary Ellen, but she was always positive, and we are grateful to all who cared for her - the staff at McAuley, those who visited her, and our SC volunteer Mariana and Margaret Davey, her support person.

Mary Ellen was always a nurse at heart. From our days in the Novitiate, she was always the first one to volunteer to assist at the Villas to care for our Sisters. The Band nicknamed her Villa Verdon.

I conclude my remarks with the quote from Saint Vincent de Paul, used in today's prayer service: "How consoled you will be at the hour of death for having consumed your life for the same purpose as Jesus Christ. It was for Charity, for God, for the poor."

Farewell dear Mary Ellen – you were a valiant, loving and giving woman, one who loved people and the seashore - may the angels, family and Sisters of Charity welcome you to paradise.

~ Sister Mary Morley