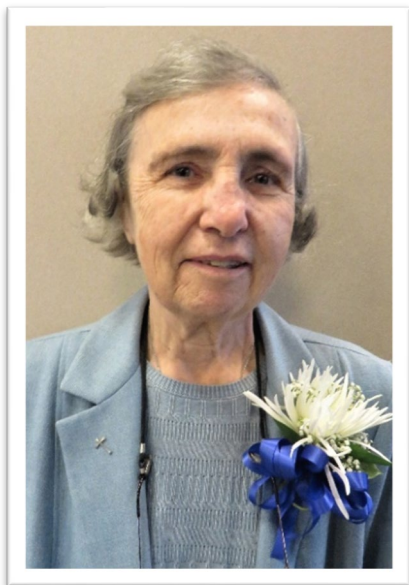


Sister Claire Donnelly, SC

Entered eternal life on February 19, 2023



Many of us have been moved and challenged by the story that, as Saint Vincent de Paul lay on his deathbed, his response to the question, "What ought to be done?" was "MORE!" That story captures the mission spirituality of Saint Vincent de Paul and it speaks to the sixty-five years of Sister Claire Donnelly's life as a Sister of Charity.

Sister Claire spent more than four decades as a teacher and a school administrator in Jersey City, Darlington, Clifton and finally twenty-two years at Saint Thomas the Apostle School in Bloomfield, NJ. During those years she earned an undergraduate degree from the College of Saint Elizabeth, a master's degree from Syracuse University with certification as a school librarian, and Certification in Administration and Supervision from Seton Hall University - all accomplishments that were the "MORE" that made her an outstanding teacher and administrator and that enriched the academic lives of the children in her care.

And Sister Claire knew why she spent forty-one years in elementary school. In 1990 she was asked by the Southern Province, "In this time of provincial renewal is there anything you'd like to share regarding your experience in ministry?" Sister Claire's response was clear as a bell. "While it is a challenge, education is still the strongest way to teach children that we must all be responsible stewards of creation, of the poor, and of each other."

While working as the Vice Principal and a part-time teacher at Saint Thomas School, Sister Claire managed to find time for "More." She was proud of the pin she was awarded for 100 hours of volunteer service at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Paterson. In the mid-1990s Sister Claire traveled to Saint Mary's Hospital in Passaic on Tuesday nights to help Spanish speaking women learn English. Having left the classroom in 2001, Sister Claire became the Project Coordinator for Community Health Care at Saint Mary's Hospital, handling administrative tasks, but always teaching. Her students were adults learning English and children ages six to eight who were mastering peace and justice techniques while their parents were taking literacy classes.

Following internal changes at the Passaic hospital, Sister Claire was admitted to the Transitions in Ministry program at Saint Joseph's Medical Center in Paterson, which led to another position working once again with students. This time she coordinated the Residency Program in Medical Education for young physicians.

And as she moved into retirement Sister Claire returned to literacy education and ESL for adults on a part-time basis at Passaic County Community College and the Father English Community Center in Paterson.

Pope Francis once described teaching as the most beautiful job. And for 60 years, Sister Claire lived out that beauty, both through her teaching and the way she lived her life.

During Sister Claire's years at St. Joseph's, Cedar Grove she was still doing her MORE. You could find her sharing her candy, spreading joy through her contagious laughter, and even pushing another sister in a wheelchair.

It seems that Sister Claire also heard the question posed to St. Vincent DePaul. . . "What ought to be done?" Her life was her answer. . . "MORE!" And now, Sister Claire, rest in peace.

Sister Beverly Ornes, SC