

Sr. Mary Elizabeth Coleman, OSF

Professed 1965



***"We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become. . . .
we are to become vessels of God's compassionate love for others."***
St. Clare of Assisi



After a life filled with love, laughter, and service to others, Sister Mary Elizabeth Coleman, OSF, (formerly Sr. Daniel Patrice), 80, died in Assisi House on November 14, 2023. Sister Mary was born in Winchester, Massachusetts, to Daniel and Mary and grew up in Roxbury with her sisters Judy and Patricia. After graduating from Holy Trinity High School in Roxbury, she entered the congregation in 1962 and professed her first vows in 1965. She earned a BA in English from Our Lady of Angels College (now Neumann University) and an MA in Pastoral Counseling from Emmanuel College.

Sister Mary ministered primarily in education and social work. She began her ministry teaching in the Greater Boston area at Our Lady of Assumption School in Lynnfield and Blessed Sacrament in Walpole before moving to the Trenton area to teach. Following her time in Trenton, Sister Mary returned to Boston to teach for a few more years before returning to school to study pastoral counseling. After completing her graduate program, she worked as a social

worker at St. Gregory Parish in Lynnfield, a guidance counselor at Our Lady of Lourdes School in Jamaica Plains, and a presenter of parenting programs in Jamaica Plains and Milton. In 2016, Sister Mary moved to Aston, where she served in local house ministry until she moved to Assisi House in 2020.

A fellow New Englander, staff member Russell Moore, bonded with Sister Mary over her love of sports. He said, "She loved her beloved Red Sox and Patriots. She never lost her South Boston accent, either. There were only 25 letters in the alphabet for Sister Mary because she never pronounced her r's!"

Sister Diane Tomkinson became good friends with Sister Mary when they were living about an hour's drive from one another in New England. Sister Diane shared, "We had deep conversations about contemporary politics and theology, despite our often very different perspectives, and cherished being 'one in heart' even when not one in mind! We shared a deep love for the ocean and the New England coast, similar tastes in music (singing along with every word of Carol King's *Tapestry* album on a long road trip!), and a desire to faithfully live our Franciscan charism and spirituality." Sister Diane also said, "Mary was generous in offering love and support to those in need—from her years of ministry with vulnerable young people, to providing encouragement to her many nieces and nephews and their children, to offering a listening ear to residents and staff who stopped by her room at Assisi House. Mary witnessed Franciscan simplicity in life."

In her reflection on her Golden Jubilee, Sister Mary described herself as an introvert who was an auditory learner with tactile tendencies. She said, "I tend to touch everything: petals on flowers, furniture, giftware, the sand under my feet, and the snow in my hands." Sister Mary also spoke of God's Extravagant Love, saying, "The tangibility of that love is manifested in kindnesses, powerful faith sharing, the sharing of our stories, the stories that give a good laugh, the touch that expresses concern and comfort, sensitivity that comes so naturally, help that is given without measure, and the Eucharist that is so deeply shared." Sister Mary, may you rest now in God's Extravagant Love.



Services will be held in Assisi House on Tuesday, November 21. The viewing will be held at 9:30 A.M. Mass of Christian Burial with follow at 11 A.M. Internment of Ashes will follow in OLA cemetery.