



Sister Mary O'Mahony, OSF *Professed 1951*

"True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life."
Pope Francis



Sister Mary O'Mahony, OSF, (formerly Sister Mary Cornelia), passed away at her home in Assisi House on December 10, 2023, after a long life of ministering with love, kindness, and caring. She had been a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 72 years. Born in Tureenclassaugh, Knocknagree, County Cork, Ireland, to Cornelius and Margaret, Sister Mary was one of seven children. She entered the congregation in Mallow in 1946 at the tender age of 14 and professed her first vows in 1951. Her older sister Nora followed in her footsteps and entered the congregation in 1949 and professed her vows in 1951. Her younger sister Bina was also a Sister of St. Francis for a time before leaving religious life.

Following her first profession, Sister Mary was sent to Klamath Falls, Oregon to complete her high school education at Sacred Heart Academy. She later earned a BA in History from the University of San Diego.

Ministering primarily in education, Sister Mary began her teaching career at Our Lady of Guadalupe School in San Diego. She worked as an educator for over 56 years, ministering in Washington, Oregon, and California. In Washington, she taught at St. Charles School in Spokane and St. Leo School in Tacoma. Sister Mary also taught at St. James School in McMinnville, Oregon. She spent the majority of her years in California, teaching at Our Lady of Guadalupe School and Madeleine School in San Diego and serving as principal at St. John's in Wasco. In reflecting on her life as a Sister of St. Francis, Sister Mary once wrote, "I am grateful for my life experience as a Sister of St. Francis. I enjoyed teaching, being a vice principal, and being a principal in elementary education and the realism and natural beauty of the western states reminded me of my homeland." In addition to her work in elementary education, Sister Mary was the director of attendance at Notre Dame High School in Riverside, California for 23 years. Sister Marie O'Connor lived and worked with Sister Mary in Wasco. She said, "She treated everyone with such dignity and respect. Her gentleness and her goodness were so evident. In fact, when students were sent to the principal's office, Sister Mary was so kind to them that I was afraid they might try to get in trouble again just to spend time with her!"

Family was very important to Sister Mary. When her sister, Bina, was first starting school, Mary's father told her to always look out for her little sister. Even though their lives took them in different directions, Mary and Bina remained close through the years. Sister Mary was a great support for Bina while she cared for her husband suffering from dementia. When Bina began suffering from dementia herself, Sister Mary was her caregiver. Her desire to protect her sister was always there.

Sister Mary enjoyed artwork, sewing, and reading. She loved to travel and had the opportunity to visit Paris, Lourdes, and Assisi. She loved experiencing other cultures. Sister Mary described herself as someone who was practical, compassionate, and flexible. Many of her sisters described her as a kind and gentle person who put others first. If someone was hurt or upset, Sister Mary jumped into action. Sister Barbara Jackson shared, "Mary was one of the kindest and gentlest souls you'd ever want to know. She never said a negative word about anyone. She was a very supportive friend, and I couldn't say enough good things about her."

In 2011 Sister Mary moved east to Philadelphia where she served in local house ministry at Our Lady of Angels Convent, before moving to Assisi House in 2019. Mary, you have lived a life of compassionate service to everyone who crossed your path. Rest now in the arms of your Loving God.

All services will be held at Assisi House on Friday, December 15, 2023. The services will be livestreamed.
Viewing will begin at 9:30 A.M., followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M.
Burial will be in OLA Cemetery.

