



Sister Anna Maria Keenaghan Professed 1957



“One of the most beautiful gifts in the world is the gift of encouragement. When someone encourages you, that person helps you over a threshold you might otherwise never have crossed on your own.” John O’Donohue

Sr. Anna Maria Keenaghan, OSF, (formerly Sr. Mary Lydia), died in Assisi House on February 19. Anna was born in Lumcloon Cloghan, County Offaly, Ireland, to parents Mary Devery and Kieran Keenaghan—one of five children raised in the home. She entered the congregation in 1953 and professed her first vows in 1957. Sr. Anna ministered primarily in education and pastoral care—ministries that took her to the dioceses of Baltimore, Charleston, and ultimately, Philadelphia. Through her ministry and example, Sr. Anna Maria shared her many gifts and encouraged her students and patients with her prayerful and caring presence.



Sr. Anna Maria dedicated over 40 years of her life in service to Catholic education as a beloved teacher, mentor, and friend to generations of students in the Archdiocese of Baltimore—teaching for many years at St. Anthony School, Baltimore; St. Stephen School, Bradshaw; and St. Clement School, Rosedale. She taught reading and social studies, two subjects that were near and dear to her heart. Later, she spent 11 years as a chaplain at St. Joseph Medical Center in Towson, where she served with modesty, integrity, and loving grace.

Sr. Mary Theresa Cloonan is Anna Maria’s cousin. The pair grew up together in Ireland and entered the congregation together in Mallow. Although they worked in separate states over the years, they stayed in touch over the phone and got together often to talk about family and friends in Ireland. Sr. Mary noted, “Sr. Anna had some health issues, but she was always reaching out to others. It was very important to her to be caring, compassionate, and present to others, even through her own pain.”

Anna considered herself a shy person but one who also enjoyed a good time. She was an avid reader and enjoyed gardening and visits to the ocean. When asked about what being a Sister of St. Francis meant to her, Anna wrote, “As a Franciscan, life has been beautiful, rewarding, and sometimes challenging. I have always experienced God’s presence in my life—in my joys and in my sorrows.” Community life was important to Sr. Anna Maria, who was always willing to help and support her fellow sisters. Sr. Mary Teresa Boland has known Sr. Anna Maria since high school and remembers her friend as a very prayerful person who loved the Franciscan way of life. “Anna had a strong determination to achieve her goals. She was a well-rounded person who loved sports and playing card games with her fellow sisters. She always had a knack for knowing what the sisters around her needed, and she would make the staff aware of these needs,” Sr. Mary Teresa said.

Poet John O’Donohue wrote, “One of the most beautiful gifts in the world is the gift of encouragement. When someone encourages you, that person helps you over a threshold you might otherwise never have crossed on your own.” Anna, you shared your gifts of compassion and encouragement with those whom you served—both in education and in pastoral services as well as in community and family life. Rest now embraced by the loving God who created and surrounded you!

All services will be held at Assisi House on Friday, February 23, 2024, and 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 Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.

