



Sister Marietta Culhane, OSF

Professed 1953

"May we joyfully witness to our faith." Pope Francis



Sr. Marietta Culhane, OSF, passed away on January 6, 2025. Over her 71 years as a professed Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia, she joyfully embodied her Franciscan charism, impacting countless lives with her wisdom, kindness, and generosity. Born Mary Lucy (Lou) Culhane in Chicago, Illinois, to her parents, Thomas and Ellen, she and her brothers, Maurice and Thomas, were members of St. Peter Canisius Parish. She was a graduate of Providence High School, earned a bachelor's degree from Villanova University, a master's in English from St. Bonaventure University, and a PhD in philosophy from Georgetown University. She was drawn to the Sisters of St. Francis by the "realness of these women, their simplicity, their concern for others, and genuine warm hospitality."

Sr. Marietta began her ministry teaching in Baltimore and served in numerous educational and pastoral roles, including Archdiocesan Supervisor of Math for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Dean of Instruction at Essex Community College, and Academic Dean at Neumann University in Aston, Pennsylvania. She was also one of the first women appointed as a Regional Pastoral Associate in the Archdiocese of

Baltimore, where she and Sr. Joan Maenner, OSF, worked with the laity to deepen the sense of Church within several parishes without resident pastors. She also served on the Board of Trustees for St. Joseph Hospital in Towson and on the Board of Neumann University. Sr. Michele O'Brien was a student of Sr. Marietta's at Towson Catholic High School and remembers her as a "loving and caring person and teacher."

Among her many accolades, Sr. Marietta conducted over 260 math workshops during a five-year period in 18 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands for teachers in public and private school systems. She gave over 100 presentations to teachers at diocesan professional days and public and parochial faculty in-service sessions. Sr. Marietta authored a National Science Foundation Institute on math which was conducted for two years at Johns Hopkins University. She was also the first woman speaker to give a conference for graduate students in the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University. For health care personnel, Sr. Marietta lectured at medical-moral workshops in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Oregon, and Washington in both Catholic and non-Catholic hospitals. She helped to set up Ethics Committees and conducted in-service sessions for doctors. Beginning in the 1970s she gave innumerable sessions for parent groups, PTAs, parish councils, etc. on moral development, moral issues, Catholic education, Church history, and educational issues. In 2004 she received the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* medal from Pope John Paul II.

Sr. Mary Smith, a longtime friend, remembers Sr. Marietta as "a religious woman of enormous energy and enthusiasm for living and proclaiming the Gospel. She was a charismatic teacher who inspired and affirmed her students. In the various ministerial opportunities she pursued, Sr. Marietta responded to God's call with deep faith and confidence—humbly attributing any success to God's gifts and goodness. Most importantly, Sr. Marietta had a loving and compassionate heart that instinctively reached out to others with an encouraging and healing presence." In her free time, Sr. Marietta enjoyed puzzles—both jigsaw and word puzzles and crosswords—and loved a good math problem that challenged her mind and skills. "She also had an intense love for dogs," shared Sr. Michele, "She had dogs when she lived with Sr. Eleanor and Joan—Bach I and Bach II. Many joked that when she visited, they didn't know if she came for them or their dogs."

When asked about her life as a Sister of St. Francis and how she would like to be remembered, Sr. Marietta wrote, "I want to be remembered as someone who loved people and worked hard in the Lord's Vineyard, and that they would say 'She did the best she could.' Being a Sister of St. Francis was worth every day of my life." All who have had the blessing of knowing Sr. Marietta treasure her memory in their hearts and the joyful gift of her example in their lives.



All services will be held at Assisi House on Friday, January 10, 2025.

Viewing will begin at 9:30 A.M., followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M. The services will be livestreamed.

Interment of Ashes will be in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.

