

Sr. Gloria Keltz, OSF

Professed 1950

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." Psalm 32:8



Embracing the guiding principle of her life, Sr. Gloria Keltz showed her desire to teach and serve with love and goodness and to walk humbly with her God. Sr. Gloria passed away at her home in Assisi House on March 3, 2025, after 75 years as a professed Sister of St. Francis.

While she was growing up, Gloria, her parents—Charles and Mary—and her six siblings were members of St. Raphael Parish in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where Sr. Gloria attended West Philadelphia Catholic High School. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia in 1948 and professed her first vows in 1950, taking the name Sr. Robert St. Joan. She went on to earn a B.S. in English from Villanova University and a Master of Science in Religious Education from La Salle University.

Gloria always knew she wanted to be a sister, but being a teacher was not her original dream. She once wrote, "I had a sister and four cousins in the Immaculate Heart of Mary congregation, but because the IHMs did not have nursing, I entered the Franciscans to be a nurse. I then spent my life in education. God puts you where He wants you, and I loved teaching." Gloria's first ministry was as a teacher at St. Katharine School in Baltimore, Maryland. Then, for 17 years, she served as a teacher at various schools in the Allentown Diocese, spent three years at Immaculate Conception in Marcus Hook, and served six years as principal of St. Bonaventure School in Philadelphia.

Equally gifted in parish ministry, Sr. Gloria spent 24 years in education and parish ministry in Puerto Rico, where she learned Spanish. "I was sent to Puerto Rico to teach English and stayed for over 20 years. I loved it. It felt like home, and I felt like I belonged with the wonderful people there. Puerto Rico was the joy of my life," she wrote.

Sr. Kate O'Donnell shared her fond memories of Sr. Gloria from a visit to Puerto Rico when she was on the general council: "I went to visit sisters in Puerto Rico, and Gloria went everywhere with me to act as my Spanish translator. She was so very kind and hospitable. A funny thing during my time there—the house where the sisters lived had a courtyard filled with coquí frogs, tiny tree frogs native to Puerto Rico known for their distinctive 'ko-kee' call. Sr. Gloria kept me calm at night when the strange sound of the coquí kept me up."

Sr. Christine Still smiles as she remembers her interactions with Sr. Gloria. "She was always extremely pleasant and had a great sense of humor. She was always ready with a joke or a laugh. There were times we would recall something and just giggle." Christine went on to say, "She truly enjoyed life to the fullest; it was an adventure for her. She was always willing to try new things—just an easy-to-be-with and inclusive person."

Sr. Guadalupe Diaz lived with Sr. Gloria for over 30 years and has nothing but fond memories of her friend, who also enjoyed music, games and puzzles, and reading. Reflecting on her life in the congregation, Sr. Gloria wrote, "I loved my life as a Franciscan. I loved the community and all my sisters." When asked how she would like to be remembered, Sr. Gloria wrote, "I hope people would say I was loving and caring to the little children. I dearly loved the children."

Sr. Gloria, with a twinkle in your eye and love in your heart, you shared your wisdom, knowledge, and kindness with all whom you met. May you rest now, knowing that you walked humbly with your God and did your best in service to others.

All services will be held at Assisi House on Thursday, March 6, 2025, and will be livestreamed. A Christian Wake Service 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.