



Sr. Marie Catherine Spellman, OSF

Professed 1956

“Friendship is the only cement that will ever hold the world together.”
~Woodrow Wilson



Throughout her 70 years as a professed sister of St. Francis, Sr. Marie Catherine Spellman used her gifts to share God’s love and to help those in need.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, and baptized Rita Helen, Sr. Marie Catherine grew up in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston with four brothers and two sisters. Her parents, Edward and Catherine, were Irish immigrants from County Roscommon. The Spellman family attended Our Lady of Lourdes and Rita was a graduate of Holy Trinity High School in Roxbury. Sr. Marie Catherine entered the congregation in August of 1953, and her mother died that December.

Sr. Marie Catherine began her ministry in elementary education in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, teaching 2nd and 3rd grades for four years at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Morton before teaching 4th and 5th grades at Nativity BVM in Media for an additional two years. Sr. Marie Catherine would go on to teach eight years in the Archdiocese of Boston at Our Lady of Assumption in Lynnfield and Blessed Sacrament in Walpole. She also taught for eight years in the Archdiocese of Trenton at St. Anthony School in Trenton and Corpus Christi School in Willingboro.

After 22 years in education ministry, Sr. Marie Catherine began a new ministry in healthcare working for seven years as the assistant patient services manager at St. Francis Medical Center in Trenton. She then worked for 15 years at St. Mary Hospital in Langhorne, Pennsylvania as a buyer in material management where she was able to work with her good friend, Sr. Clare Carty—the hospital’s CEO. Sr. Gertrude Carocci said Sr. Marie Catherine was well known in the hospital and that “she was very kind and friendly, and people looked up to her. She loved them and they loved her. If they had a need either at the hospital or at home, they didn’t hesitate to call her.” Another good friend from her time at St. Mary’s was former administrator Greg Wozniak, who along with his family, remained close to Sr. Marie Catherine, often calling and visiting her. Following her time at St. Mary’s, Sr. Marie Catherine worked as a coordinator at St. Agnes Medical Center in South Philadelphia for five years. Next, she spent 16 years volunteering at Assisi House and driving for sisters at OLA and two years in local house ministry at Portiuncula Convent before moving to Assisi House in 2024.

In her free time, Sister Marie Catherine enjoyed reading, watching her beloved Red Sox and New England Patriots, and spending time with family and friends. Sr. Marie Rachfalski shared, “Marie Catherine remained faithful to her friends. Long after Sr. Clare Carty died, Marie kept in touch with Clare’s brother Tom. Every summer she would visit former member Nancy Hanson—now Sr. Marie Jacqueline, a Visitation sister—in Tyringham, Massachusetts.” Sr. Gertrude also attested to Marie Catherine’s commitment to her friends. They met as postulants at OLA and though they were never stationed together, they remained friends through the years. Sr. Gertrude explained, “She was a great friend and knew how to listen. As the years went on, we planned retreats and vacations together, often going to a retreat house in Long Beach Island, New Jersey, and vacationing at Brant Beach and then in Sea Isle. We loved being by the ocean.”

Sr. Marie Catherine was a dedicated aunt to her many nieces and nephews. All her siblings predeceased her, and she made sure that she kept in touch with their children and was a loving presence in their lives. Sr. Marie Rachfalski said, “Although she stayed in the background and didn’t have to be the ‘star of the show,’ she was present to all she met. She was a good and faithful friend, quiet and steady, and helpful to anyone.” Sr. Marie Catherine, your faithful presence touched the lives of many. Rest now in the arms of our Loving God.



*All services will be held in Assisi House on Tuesday, June 16, and will be livestreamed.
A Christian Wake Service will be held at 9:30 A.M. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11 A.M.
Burial will be in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.*

