



Sister Eleanor Cecilia Getz, OSF

Professed 1951



Sr. Eleanor Cecilia lived a life of loving service in education and parish work. Born Claire Regina in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Peter and Eleanor, Sr. Eleanor was one of six children, including her twin, Marie. The Getz family belonged to St. Malachy parish, and Eleanor was a graduate of Hallahan High School. She entered the congregation in 1949 and professed her first vows in 1951. Sr. Eleanor earned a BS in Education and an MS in Secondary Science, both from Villanova University.

Some might say that Sr. Eleanor was destined to be a Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia. In the spring of 1948, young Claire asked her father for permission to enter the convent, and he wanted to know which community. When she shared the “Glen Riddle Franciscans,” her father smiled and told her a story about the day she was born. On that very day, her father Peter had a meeting with Sr. Gratiana. (He was an architect and was designing the novitiate building at OLA.) When Sr. Gratiana learned that he had been blessed with twin girls, she asked him what their

names were going to be. He said, “One Claire, the other Marie.” Sr. Gratiana pointed at a statue of St. Clare and said, “We’ll take care of Clare, and you may care for Marie.” Sr. Eleanor later wrote, “Little did I know that the seed of my Franciscan vocation was sown the day I was born.”

Sr. Eleanor began her ministry teaching elementary school in the Allentown Diocese at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Minersville. After seven years in Minersville, she would spend the rest of her life living and ministering in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. She taught at Nativity BVM in Media and taught science at Little Flower High School and West Catholic High School. Her last two years at West Catholic, Sr. Eleanor was on the planning committee for the International Eucharistic Congress that took place in Philadelphia. In the year following the congress, she worked for the Office of Eucharistic Renewal implementing programs that evolved from the congress. Her next ministry took her to Cardinal O’Hara High School in Springfield where she taught religion for several years, before beginning parish work, first as a Director of Religious Education at Nativity BVM, and then spent 13 years at All Saints in Bridesburg. Sr. Debbie Krist lived with her at All Saints and she shared, “It was a joy to live with Sr. Eleanor. She always had a smile on her face and radiated Franciscan joy to everyone she encountered. Her warmth, kindness, and gentle spirit brought light to all. And of course, her love of ice cream was one of the many delightful qualities that made her easy to love and remember!” Following her years at All Saints, Sr. Eleanor went back to Little Flower to work in the main office and then spent one year at All Saints in pastoral services before moving to Assisi House.

Family and friends were very important to Sr. Eleanor. Marie, her twin, was also a Hallahan graduate and the two took dance together for twelve years, performing at the Academy of Music, Atlantic City’s Steel Pier, Hallahan’s school shows, and other venues. Marie married and had children, and when she preceded Eleanor in death, her children remained very close to Sr. Eleanor. Her brother Joseph was an Augustinian, and he was ordained the same year that she made her first profession. They celebrated their 25th and 50th Jubilees together. Her brother Paul was an architect, like their father, and he designed Assisi House. After moving to Assisi House she wrote, “Here I am now, enjoying the fruits of his art and his great work!”

In addition to ice cream, Sr. Eleanor enjoyed dancing, reading, and doing puzzles. She loved her God, her family, and her community, and she lived her life from this abundance. Her Franciscan joy will live on in the many lives she touched along the way.

*All services will be held in Assisi House on Friday, July 17, 2026, and will be livestreamed.
A Christian Wake Service will be held at 9:30 A.M., followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M.,
and burial in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.*

