Sr. Michael Kathleen Deane, OSF

Professed 1951



Sr. Michael Kathleen Deane was a teacher at heart—imaginative, encouraging, and wholly devoted to the children in her care and to her life as a Sister of St. Francis. Born Mary Kathleen Deane in Washington, D.C., to Henry and Kathleen, she was a member of Nativity Parish and a graduate of the Academy of the Holy Names. She and her brothers Borden and William grew up in a loving family, and she credited her vocation to the influence of both her Catholic father and her mother, whom she described as "very devout and prayerful" and who, as Sr. Michael liked to point out, was a member of the Takoma Park Baptist Church. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis in 1948 and professed her first vows in 1951.

Sr. Michael's 75 years as a Sister of St. Francis were given almost entirely to Catholic education, 58 of them in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. She taught in Baltimore City at Saints Philip and James, St. Katharine, and Shrine of the Little Flower, then taught the middle grades at Immaculate Conception in Towson and at St. Clement Mary Hofbauer in Rosedale. After five years teaching seventh grade at Our Lady of Lourdes in Bethesda, she returned to St. Clement as principal, a post she held for 23 years. She led the school through accreditation, wired it for the computer age, and even after she retired as principal, spent 12 years volunteering at The Catholic High School of Baltimore. She simply wasn't ready to stop being around students.

Whatever her role, Sr. Michael made sure she knew every child by name. At St. Clement, each student received a birthday card from her with a handwritten note inside. She loved being with the children and prayed for them every day, hoping to be a model who helped them love the Lord more and more. Sr. Sheila Mary remembered her as "the most wonderful principal," describing her as fair and loving in all she did.

Her classroom was never dull. Upon news of her death, many former students took to social media to express their appreciation for her as a teacher and principal. Her most powerful tool was "the look," which she said froze students in their tracks. One of her seventh-graders at Our Lady of Lourdes was Martin O'Malley, a fine, ambitious student who became student council president. He went on to become mayor of Baltimore and governor of Maryland, and he never forgot her. When she celebrated her 50th Jubilee in 2001, he surprised her at St. Clement, proclaiming it "Sister Michael Kathleen Day," and told the school community how she had made a difference in thousands of lives. When his band recorded a song honoring the nuns who taught him, *The Baltimore Sun* turned to her for the story. She was proud of him, saying, "Someday I hope to greet him as President O'Malley."

Outside the classroom, Sr. Michael was positively full of fun. She loved her family, gardening, music, and cheering on her beloved Orioles and Ravens. She had a fabulous sense of humor, especially when she was with her sidekick, Sr. Georgina. The two were nearly inseparable and particularly enjoyed trips to the Hallmark store, where they could happily spend hours browsing. Sr. Michael also loved working on puzzles with the other sisters, and she had a running joke of secretly hiding one piece so she could be the one to complete the puzzle. It was a little trick that never seemed to get old, becoming a running joke among the sisters, who would eagerly place the second-to-last piece and wait for Sr. Michael to produce the missing final piece.

Perhaps the simplest way to understand Sr. Michael is through the words of her former student: "One person can make a difference, and each of us has to try." Sr. Michael tried every day, in her classrooms, in her prayer, and in the way she loved her life as a Franciscan. Rest now, dear sister, in the love of the Lord you taught so many children to love.

All services will be held in Assisi House on Monday, October 19, 2026, and will be livestreamed.
A Christian Wake Service will be held at 9:30 A.M. Mass of Christian Burial will follow at 11 A.M.,
with burial in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.