



Eleanor Carbin, SHCJ

Educator, Pastoral and Social Worker, ESL Teacher

March 22, 1920 – January 11, 2021

Rosemont, Pennsylvania – Eleanor Carbin, SHCJ, a Sister of the Holy Child Jesus for 79 years, died peacefully of congestive heart failure on Monday, January 11, 2021. She was 100.

Sister Nell saw herself as “a very insignificant piece of a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle.” She felt blessed with good health and energy, as well as with wonderful friends and the companionship and love of the Holy Child Sisters, whose outstanding talents she admired. Upon her 100th birthday, Sister Nell reflected, “I am surrounded by modern miracles too numerous to mention. I marvel at the beauty of our tiny planet and say, ‘O Lord, my God, how great Thou art!’” Sister Nell will be greatly missed.



Sister Eleanor, the eldest daughter of nine children, spent most of her childhood in Melrose, Massachusetts, where she and her family lived through the Great Depression. She was educated by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus at Saint Mary School and felt called to religious life after she graduated. However, she tempered her desire to become a Catholic sister and stayed home to help her family. Eventually, Sister Eleanor’s parents learned of her wish to become a sister, and on December 31, 1938, Sister Eleanor entered the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. She made her first and final vows in 1941 and 1946, respectively. She became well known by her religious name, Mary Mother Kentigern. Eventually, she was lovingly referred to as Sister Nell.

Sister Nell’s service to God and others is legendary in the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Early in her vocation, she taught at Assumption School (1941-1943) and Saint Edward School (1943-1949), both in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1949, Sister Nell’s desire to teach in West Africa was granted. From 1949-1978, she served at Holy Child schools in Ghana and Nigeria, living through the tumultuous Biafran War. She briefly returned to the United States and taught at Saint Charles School in Portland, Oregon (1967-1968).

After ministering for nearly 30 years in West Africa, Sister Nell moved back to the United States and began working in academic, social service or pastoral positions for the next three decades. Among the places she served were Our Lady of Lourdes School in New York City (1982-1985), Barrio Action Youth & Family Center in Los Angeles (1986-1988), Rosemont College’s Campus Ministry in Rosemont, Pennsylvania (1990-1992), and Levi Gould House in Melrose, Massachusetts (1992-1996). In 1998, she had the privilege to teach English in Slovakia for one

year. When she returned, Sister Nell taught English as a Second Language (ESL), ministered to individuals with visual impairments, and recorded audiobooks for the blind.

In retirement, Sister Nell's outreach continued through her sewing projects, hospitality, and reading to others. Her prayer life was unceasing.

She joins her parents Thomas and Catherine (Lambe) Carbin, brothers Thomas, Kevin, George, Joseph, John, and William, and sister Margaret McHugh, in eternal rest. She is survived by her brother Richard and many nieces, nephews, grand- and great-nieces and nephews.

Sister Nell earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from Villanova University in 1948.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus – American Province, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA 19010, or can be made online at www.shcj.org/american/donate.