



**Claire Smith, SHCJ**  
**April 7, 1940 – February 17, 2025**  
**Educator and Administrator**

Rosemont, Pennsylvania – Claire Smith, SHCJ, a Sister of the Holy Child Jesus for 64 years, died peacefully on Monday, February 17, 2025. She was 84.

Coming from a large, tight-knit family, Sister Claire described herself as a natural caretaker: “When I saw a need, I wanted to fill it; when a situation was perceived to be snarled, I wanted to set it right ... I not only saw. I was a doer.”

Sister Claire’s many gifts were often called upon during her years of religious life. Longtime friends Jeanne Marie Hatch, SHCJ, and Carroll Juliano, SHCJ, agreed with Sister Claire’s self-assessment: “Claire couldn’t help herself in serving others, even to a fault, and that took courage and love. She was also an incredibly loyal and true friend. She will be deeply missed by many.”



Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Sister Claire attended West Philadelphia Catholic Girls' High School. Her love and appreciation for the Holy Child Sisters who taught there led Sister Claire to enter the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. She made her first and final vows in 1961 and 1966, respectively. She became well known by her religious name, Sister John of the Cross.

Sister Claire's ministry in education spanned several decades. She was an excellent and beloved teacher and administrator who enjoyed “empowering teachers and offering them encouragement.” She served at Annunciation School in Washington, D.C. (1961-65, 1971-74, 1986, and 1997-99); Holy Child Academy in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania (1965-71 and 1979-84); and Holy Spirit School in Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania (1974-78).

Sister Claire also served in other ministries, including as the business manager at the School of the Holy Child in Rye, New York (1984-86), and as the hospital chaplain and caseworker for Catholic Charities in Washington, D.C. (1987-90).

In 1990, Sister Claire was named to Holy Child Center’s Administrator Team, overseeing buildings and grounds, a position she held for six years. She also worked in Rosemont College’s Education Department, where she served in various roles, including supervisor of the student teachers.

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In 2015, Sister Claire, along with six Holy Child Sisters, moved to a retirement facility in Chester County. Once there, Sister Claire's caring heart and concern for the residents quickly became evident.

After an illness, Sister Claire moved to Holy Child Center in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, in October 2022. Sister Claire's concern and genuine interest in others continued in her new home, often asking the Sisters and staff about their families and loved ones.

Sister Claire earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Villanova University in 1969 and a Master of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, in 1973.

In eternal rest, she joins her parents, John and Mary McTamney; brother, John; sister, Eileen McKenna; and brother-in-law, Jim Hale. She is survived by her sister, Mary Teresa Hale; sister and brother-in-law, Ellen and Jim Hagen; brother and sister-in-law, Michael and Terry Smith; sister and brother-in-law, Andrea and Bud Newdeck; brother-in-law Ed McKenna; sister-in-law Sue Smith, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Friends and family are invited to a Prayer of Remembrance on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., and a Mass of Christian Burial on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., at Holy Child Chapel, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, Pennsylvania 19010. Preceding Mass, friends and family are welcome to attend the visitation at 10:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus – American Province, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, Pennsylvania 19041, or made online at <https://www.shcj.org/american/donate/>.