



St. Anne Province Center
Melbourne, Kentucky
July 7, 2020

SISTER JOHN CATHERINE RAFFERTY
was called into eternal life.

Born March 21, 1932 in Largylea, Pomeroy, County Tyrone in Northern Ireland, Sr. John Catherine Rafferty entered eternal life on July 5, 2020 at Holy Family Home. She was eighty-eight years old and in her 65th year as a professed member of the Congregation of Divine Providence.

Sarah Brigid was the oldest of five children born to John and Catherine Rafferty. She is preceded in death by her brothers Peter, Paul, and Michael. She is survived by her sister Mary Ann Donaghy and nieces and nephews.

Sr. John Catherine knew that the Hand of Providence guided her along every step of her life. She attended St. Brigid's Public Elementary in Altmore, Ireland. One Saturday evening while she was shopping with her mother, they stopped for confession in St. Patrick's Church. A Sister of Mercy walking down the aisle caught Sr. John Catherine's attention and began the promptings which would persist during the next few years: Would I like to be a sister?

Since she was the oldest child, Sr. John Catherine was responsible for driving the family tractor on the main road. She was sent to help a neighbor Joe Quinn with a load of turf. There she met his sister Sr. Justinian Quinn, CDP from Kentucky who was on a visit with her family. Sr. Justinian invited Sr. John Catherine to consider going to the United States with her. Wanting to give her life to God and serve in whatever way she could, she accepted the invitation and entered St. Anne Convent on September 2, 1951. She made her first profession of vows on August 29, 1955 and final vows on August 29, 1960.

Teaching had always been a very satisfying experience for Sr. John Catherine. She was very capable, efficient, and creative and had remarkable rapport with her students. She prepared for this ministry by obtaining her A.B. degree from Villa Madonna College (now Thomas More University) and her M.Ed. from Xavier University.

After her first profession of vows in 1955, Sr. John Catherine was sent to teach at Holy Family School in Ashland, KY. Her three years there with sisters who were welcoming, helpful, and understanding was a great way to begin her teaching profession. She taught at Corpus Christi School in Newport, KY from 1958 to 1960. Sr. John Catherine moved to Ohio where she taught at Assumption School in Mt. Healthy from 1960 to 1966. Sister returned to Kentucky to teach at St. Julian School in Middlesboro from 1966 to 1968 and St. Ann School in Covington from 1968 to 1970. Then Sr. John Catherine was named principal at Our Lady of Good Help School in Mapleville, Rhode Island. The school was closed in 1973 after it was partially burned due to an electrical failure. Back in Kentucky, Sister worked at St. Camillus Academy in Corbin until 1982 as a teacher and then as the principal from 1979 to 1982. She returned to teaching at Good Shepherd School in Frankfort from 1982 to 1989 and then back again to St. Camillus Academy from 1989 to 2000 when she retired.

from her teaching profession. Sr. John Catherine moved to Holy Family Home where for several years she was the bookkeeper and a team government member and participated in community service.

In her reflections, Sr. John Catherine noted several persons who had a significant influence on her life. Her parents were people of deep faith who were always giving of themselves to family and neighbors. Sr. Justinian was her first contact, Sr. Marie Suzanne was firm but kind, and Sr. Mary of the Trinity was a caring teacher. She also named Fr. Quinn, Frances Hoffer, and her eighth grade teacher Miss McComisky.

Sr. John Catherine's motto was: if something is worth doing, then give it your best. This she did both in her personal life and in her teaching career. Sister was an excellent, dedicated teacher who was loved by all her classes. Her students appreciated her strictness and liked her fun.

Sr. John Catherine was very attentive to her spiritual life and faithful in her prayer life. She was a very kind, gentle woman who seldom ever complained. Sister was grateful for every little thing and always had a few kind words to say. She readily shared her wonderful sense of humor and her easy smile was reflected in her eyes – those Irish smiling eyes.

In thanksgiving for our dear Sr. John Catherine and for her witness as a loving, joyful woman of Providence and as a woman of prayer, compassion, and loving service throughout her religious life, let us entrust her to the care of our Provident God.

United in God's gracious Providence,

Sister Barbara Patrick, CDP for
Sister Barbara Rohe, CDP, Provincial

Due to the coronavirus, there will be no wake or visitation. The Mass and burial will be private. At a later date, there will be a memorial celebration of Sr. John Catherine's life.

Mass of Christian Burial: Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 9:00 AM
Immaculate Conception Chapel, Melbourne

Burial in the Convent Cemetery, Melbourne, Kentucky