

Sister Maureen Matthews

Entered eternal life on December 17, 2016



Last Saturday, December 17th, Sister Maureen Matthews went peacefully home to God. A Sister of Charity for 57 years, Maureen spent much of her life at Convent Station.

Maureen entered the Sisters of Charity on August 20, 1959 – a very hot day as I remember it. Maureen joined with 66 of us as we began this journey. I have often thought of how trying it must have been for Maureen and several others in our band who were adults and had been working in responsible positions to now be in the company of so many teenagers day in and day out.

Maureen, the first born child of Agnes (Kelly) and James Matthews, was born on October 31, 1935. She grew up in Paterson and before she entered taught at Eastside High School in Paterson. She had graduated from the College of Saint Elizabeth as an English major in 1956 and had obtained her MA from Seton Hall University in Secondary Education before she entered.

As a postulant, Maureen taught at the Prep School and as a junior professed at the Academy of Saint Elizabeth and then went on to study at Columbia University for her Ed. D. She earned her degree in 1973 and returned to Convent to become a professor at the College of Saint Elizabeth where she ministered until 1992. At the end of her time there, she was the Assistant Academic Dean. Her ministry and her passion were education. I believe her happiest years were those preparing college students to be secondary level teachers. In speaking with a few people about her as a teacher at both the Academy and the College I was told again and again of what a wonderful and popular teacher she was.

She also enjoyed doing workshops and presentations for school faculties and parents. For a period of time she served as a Board member at St. Joseph Hospital in Paterson. Her Paterson ties were strong, lifelong, and deep.

She left the College in 1992 and became a caregiver to both her Mom and her Aunt Catherine who at that time were living in Hawthorne.

Maureen had a younger brother Jim whom she often spoke about and she took great pride in his achievements and in his family. Jim and his wife Christine and their children, Jamie, Peter and Paul have been so faithful to her, especially during these last difficult years as she struggled with illness. I am sure Jim and Christine, you and your children know how much she loved all of you. You were always there for her.

In some ways, it's easy to do the chronology of Maureen's life and much harder to capture the person who was Maureen. I remember her as a person who enjoyed a good time and who often played the piano for us in our early years together. I know how dedicated she was to the ministry of teaching which was a lifelong commitment for her. Her love of family was demonstrable.

I am sure that many here with us today as we celebrate Maureen's life could add their own memories and thoughts.

To all who cared for her here at St. Anne Villa we give thanks. Her three years here were blessed because of you.

We are at the end of the Advent season- for Maureen the time of waiting is now over. I am sure that our loving God welcomed her home with open arms as did her beloved mother and father and so many others – among them Sister Josephine Mary and Sister Anne Bernadette.

Maureen walked by faith, sustained by it, especially in the difficult times but now she is experiencing the fullness of life. The new things spoken about in Paul's letter today are now reality for her. She now experiences the Gospel proclaimed today in which Jesus says, "I will come back again and take you to myself so that where I am you also may be." She is home.

Maureen, we give thanks for your life as a Sister of Charity and count on your intercession now so that we may continue the Mission of Charity, making God's love known in our world. Be at peace.

Sister Maureen Shaughnessy