

Sister Angelica Doris



When Sister Angelica Doris talks about her life as a Sister of Charity, her face lights up with a radiant smile. Her narrative is continually punctuated by her gentle laugh. Almost 96 years old, Sister Angelica continues a life exemplified by dedicated service, graciousness and humility.

Sister Angelica was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1919. She was the second oldest of eight children in her family. As a student in Catholic grammar school and later at St. Vincent Academy, she was attracted to the Sisters of Charity who taught her with patience and love. She recalls, “When I was in high school, I really wanted to be a teacher and I had decided to enter the Sisters of Charity. My mother was thrilled but my father was dead set against it!”

Instead of entering the Sisters of Charity immediately after high school, Sister Angelica went to work in an office in the Prudential Building in Newark. She continued her education with night classes at Seton Hall University. The income she earned helped to support her family after her father died in 1940.

While her entrance into religious life was delayed, Sister Angelica continued to hold onto her desire to become a Sister of Charity as she worked in Newark throughout the years of World War II. In 1946, she entered the Sisters of Charity. She was 26 years old and looked forward to devoting her life to ministry as a teacher.

Although Sister Angelica enjoyed teaching elementary school for two years, it seemed that God and the Sisters of Charity had other plans for her. With Sister Angelica’s experience in office work, she was sent out to serve as the Business Manager at St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center in Paterson.

Sister Angelica’s assignment to St. Joseph’s Hospital was the beginning of almost sixty years of ministry in healthcare administration. Over the years, Sister Angelica took on ever increasing responsibilities. With a Masters of Public Health in Hospital Administration from Yale University in 1965, she moved into leadership roles in administration first at St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center and then at All Souls Hospital in Morristown.

To Sister Angelica, the essence of hospital administration has always been the mission of charity. Charity can be offered on a broad scale, such as through the policy of providing health care to people in need regardless of their ability to pay. Sister Angelica found that charity could also be shown through the day to day interactions with the people she encountered in the hospital. “As a Sister of Charity, you want to be gracious and kind to people.” She says, “In those days, you could get to know all the employees and even their families.” She adds, “It was fun!”

In 1971, Sister Angelica was elected to the General Council of the Sisters of Charity. She served in Congregational leadership over the next thirteen years while continuing her ministry in healthcare administration by serving on the Boards and on Board Committees of all seven hospitals then sponsored by the Sisters of Charity. In 1979, Sister Angelica became a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Sister Angelica resumed her fulltime ministry in healthcare administration in 1984 when she became the Director of Programs and Projects for the Catholic Health Association in St. Louis. From 1986-2004, she was the President of the Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation, where she received the first Good Samaritan Hospital Meritorious Award “for her unending dedication and for the compassion, direction, and competence she brought to the hospital.” After retiring as President of the Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation at age 85, Sister

Angelica continued to use her expertise in healthcare to process Medicare and supplemental insurance claims for the Sisters living in the Motherhouse.

As she nears her 96th birthday, Sister Angelica remains active and in good health. She volunteers for the Miriam Teresa League by answering phone inquiries about Blessed Miriam Teresa. She enjoys crossword puzzles, is an avid reader and has recently taken up the resolution to read the Bible from beginning to end. She is thankful for her continued mobility and is looking forward to a month long vacation with her nieces and extended family at the Jersey Shore.

Sister Angelica is ever grateful for her vocation and her life as a Sister of Charity over the past 69 years. She affirms that the life of “simplicity, humility, and charity is the life I chose.” And as anyone who knows Sister Angelica would agree, she adds, “It’s the life I live.”