



Sister Teresa Regina Confroy, SC
Entered eternal life on August 12, 2024

When I think of Sister Teresa Regina, I think of the quote from *Toward Boundless Charity* (the Constitution of the Sisters of Charity): “As Sisters of Charity, we are called to a life of giving of our talents, our resources, ourselves, without condition and without reservation.”

That is Sister Teresa Regina Confroy in a nutshell. Her whole life was a testimony to the value of self-giving and service.

Teresa Regina’s lifelong dream was to become a nurse. In 1957, her dream came true as she enrolled in St. Joseph’s Hospital Nursing School. She later graduated with a BSN from Seton Hall and obtained a master’s in nursing with a specialty in geriatrics from the University of Pennsylvania.

Teresa worked at St. Joseph’s Hospital until 1981. During those 20-plus years, she was a staff nurse, head nurse, and operating room supervisor. Her last two positions at St. Joseph’s were Assistant Administrator/Director of Nursing and Vice President of Patient Care Services.

Her colleagues in the early days at St. Joseph’s called her T.R. Many of them still talk about her and say she was an extraordinary nurse - one of the best nurses they have ever known.

Of all Teresa's positions at St. Joseph’s Hospital, her favorite was overseeing the men’s ward. She once said: “These patients were usually homeless who had nowhere else to go for the winter months. They came every year and stayed between Thanksgiving and Easter. All the staff cared for them just like any other patients on the ward or in the hospital. They got wonderful care.”

Because of her lifelong commitment to nursing, the Nurse Practice Council at St. Joseph’s instituted *The Recognize a Nurse Award* in her honor. This award (which is still given) recognizes nurses at St. Joseph’s who deliver quality nursing care with compassion and care. Teresa was present at the first award ceremony and was presented with an official *Recognize a Nurse* pin.

After St. Joseph’s, Teresa moved on to Public Health nursing in Ocean County, where she became the Assistant Director for Public Health Nursing. There, she was responsible for home visits, ambulatory care, and case management services.

In 2000, she became the Coordinator of Health and Lifestyle Transition Services for the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth. During that time, I had the privilege of working with her. I found her one of the easiest people to work with. She taught me so much about healthcare, and in the end, I have to say that she was one of the greatest mentors I have ever had.

During the years I worked with her, I saw her willingly and lovingly make herself available to others. She provided medical advice to countless sisters in the Motherhouse (sometimes at the buffet line during lunch or at night when she was in her room.) I called these “curbside consults.”

In her position with Lifestyle Transition, she accompanied many sisters to the doctors' appointments. She listened attentively to what the doctors said and then skillfully explained all that medical jargon to the sisters in a way that she could understand.

Teresa often got called in the middle of the night to address a medical emergency and then sat with the sister in the emergency room to make sure that the sister was comfortable and got what she needed.

If a Sister needed long-term care, Sister Teresa would help them pack up, drive them to their new home, unpack for them, and help them settle in. I always told Teresa she was a full-service nurse!

My most memorable trip with Teresa was transporting a sister's cat to its new home. As I said, she was a full-service nurse!

Teresa's care for others was very hands-on and very personal. Because of how she approached her work, the Sisters trusted and had confidence in her. The physicians who treated the sisters felt the same way. Every encounter she had with people was done in a respectful, loving, and caring way.

Teresa exercised leadership in other ways as well. She had extensive experience in governance, serving on the Board of Trustees for the Hospital of Saint Raphael and Saint Raphael's Healthcare System. Before that she served as a Councilor in the Western Province and a trustee of Mount Saint Andrew Residence in Paramus.

Family was very important to Teresa. The youngest of 12, she had many nieces and nephews. She loved you very much and spoke of you often.

She also enjoyed her yearly vacations at Harvey Cedars with her niece Betty Ann, her friend Jean Spina, and later, Sister Eileen and Cathy Pietranico.

Of course, her second family was the Benedictines. She really could have been a Benedictine. She certainly lived the charism of the Benedictines, integrating prayer and work in service to others.

Before I close, I'd like to thank everyone who cared for Teresa in the last few years. Cathy and Eileen cared for her in the Motherhouse before she was admitted to St. Joseph's Healthcare and Rehab in Cedar Grove. I am also grateful for those who cared for her at the facility. Teresa wasn't the easiest patient to care for; she would have rather cared for others. She wasn't happy if she wasn't taking care of someone else.

I want to close with a quote found in the prayer book she received for her First Communion. It was written by her brother, Mark. It says: To my little sister: May the Morning Star ever guide you in life and lead you to the Heavenly reward. God bless you on this, your Happy Day. Your brother, Mark.

I would imagine that many of you (maybe even all of you here today) benefited in some way from Teresa's care. That said, join me in praying: Well done, good and faithful servant. Go forth to your Heavenly reward. Amen!

Sister Patricia Mennor, SC