

## **Sister Elizabeth Harnett**

Entered eternal life on August 13, 2018

John and Mary, parents of Sister Elizabeth, gave life to five children in the Roxbury section of Boston. Life was simple. Roxbury inhabitants were mostly Irish and Jewish. The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth taught in two area schools and possibly that was the start of Sister's call. Can you imagine sending your daughter, a young teenager, to a very far off New Jersey? There she would begin her schooling and preparation to become a Sister. Many families would meet at South Station to take the train to reach this destination. It was there that families and young women became friends and encouraged one another at the start of a new way of life for all.



Sister taught in three great cities: Newark, Jersey City and Boston. Her teaching was in the broadest definition of the word. She was always serene, deep, willing and generous. We met when I was in my 20's and she was in her 40's. Possibly because of her beautiful white hair I thought she was ancient! When it came to the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy-she was there. She visited the sick, went to wakes, found food and clothing for those who needed it, gave extra help and time to the student and was a "spiritual social worker."

Maybe it was Vatican II or a special desire to help those who were challenged that brought Sister to request training in teaching those who had needs beyond the help of the ordinary classroom. With her strong, gentle approach, she assisted those who had sight or vision impairment, to make their way and achieve as much independence as possible. She helped me become aware of needs in this area when she left traditional teaching a second time, to seek ministry with these children and adults. I drove her to interviews and saw first-hand her special charism, "seeing with the heart."

One other unique experience with Sister Elizabeth was her association with Father Lenny Tighe and their ministry at the Lemmuel Shattuck Hospital, a city nursing home. It was a new building, housing the poorest of the poor. They treated each person, staff and patient, with respect, dignity and hope. They had no money but through their love and Providence, the hospital became a home.

What message does Sister Elizabeth's life have for us today?

Trust in Providence---go beyond the surface of things---take a chance, what have you really got to lose?---learn a lesson/gain an experience---God loves a cheerful giver and that was Liz.

I have touched the surface of her life...may we all learn more in eternity.

Sister Mary Pauline Hogan