

## REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF SISTER NORA MARIE DIGGIN

### February 15, 1929—August 20, 2018



Born in Hazelwood on February 15, 1929, Sister Nora Marie was the daughter of William J. Diggin (born in Lahardane, County Kerry, Ireland) and Nora Ware (born in Vallylongford, County Kerry, Ireland). There were six girls in the Diggin family: Mary, Catherine (whom we knew as Sister Felicita), Joan, Margaret Nora (she was called Peggy who later took the name Sister Nora Marie), Lenore, and Patricia. Sister Felicita died in 2004 and Joan died in 2011. When Sister Nora Marie was twelve years old, her Dad, a streetcar conductor, died on the streetcar of a heart attack, leaving his wife and six daughters.

Sister Nora Marie attended Saint Stephen School, Hazelwood, and graduated from Sacred Heart High School, Shadyside, in 1947. She worked for six years at Westinghouse Electrical Company doing secretarial work. In 1953, she joined Sister Felicita as a Sister of Charity. When she entered, Father Murphy, pastor of St. Stephen's wrote, "I am happy to be able to state that Peggy is one of the best girls in my parish. I can even add to that statement that I do not know of a better girl in any parish. I congratulate the Sisters of Charity in getting such a candidate."

Sister Nora Marie earned a BS in Elementary Education from Seton Hill University. Most of her teaching days during the years of 1953 to 1987 were in first grade classrooms at schools located in Pittsburgh, Greensburg, Maryland, and Arizona. Her students were well-behaved, well-trained, and motivated to learn. Sister Nora Marie was selected for "Who's Who among American Teachers." She often trained the altar servers in the parishes in which she ministered.

At the time of her silver jubilee as a Sister of Charity, Sister Nora Marie wrote, "I have no special honors or experiences to share. Most of my teaching days have been in the first grade," She obviously was too humble to list all of the characteristics that awarded her the reputation of being an excellent first grade teacher. Her students loved her. She had a caring personality and students knew she would always listen to them. She always tried her best to understand the needs of each one. Sister Nora Marie had a sense of humor that enabled her to enjoy the creative and humorous ways her students shared their stories and told about fun times with their families. She was always gentle, kind, and receptive to the

children's comments. Sister Nora Marie deserved special honors for her years of teaching first grade and making it an exciting time for the young children. I'm sure many of them remember first grade as being the best year ever! Sister Nora Marie may not have received special honors for being an outstanding teacher, but I'm sure, that in the eyes of God, she demonstrated the virtues of humility, simplicity, and charity, in the tradition of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton who was a model teacher.

In 1988, Sisters Nora Marie and Felicita enjoyed a trip to Ireland, the birthplace of their parents.

In 1987, Sister Nora Marie wrote to Sister Lois Sculco, a Council member at the time, indicating an interest in the position of insurance clerk that the community had advertised. The list of procedures for ministry placement stated, if interested, request an interview with the prospective employer, Sister Ellenita. Sister Nora Marie made that call to make the necessary arrangements. Thus began a twenty-two year career at DePaul Center. She became Director of the Insurance Program and then Head of Central Checking until her retirement in 2009.

Sister Nora Marie enjoyed her years at DePaul Center. When she worked with health insurance, she was challenged to find the best coverage at the lowest cost to the community. With the central checking tasks, she faced the challenge of "keeping all the different house accounts in agreement with the bank." The sisters felt that Sister Nora Marie was always helpful and gentle in dealing with local treasurers and with individual sisters.

During her stay at Caritas Christi, Sister Nora Marie helped out whenever and wherever she was needed. She worked at the reception desk, made sure the sisters received a bit of candy now and then. Because of her high standards for accuracy and confidentiality, another task that came to Sister Nora Marie was that of serving on the election committee for several Chapters.

Sister accompanied priests on rounds to the sisters' rooms on second floor for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, led prayers, and did other tasks that she was called upon to do. She was extremely generous. She was willing to trade desk shifts with anyone or cover for a sister, never asking them to return the favor.

Even though Sister Nora Marie did not see herself as having received honors, she has honored us with her gifts and with her life as a Sister of Charity. We join with her in expressing what she said at the time of her Golden Jubilee: "I am grateful for the gift of my vocation and for the many opportunities I have received to serve God's people."

Sister Nora Marie had what I call quiet enthusiasm. During a World Series in which the Pirates were playing the Baltimore Orioles, she celebrated the event in her by waving a Pirate flag quietly while walking her students to lunch through the halls of the school in Glyndon.

Sister Nora Marie touched many lives in the way of St. Vincent DePaul who said, "If God is at the center of your life, no words are necessary. Your mere presence will touch hearts."

We thank you, Nora, for touching our hearts with the gift of your presence in in our lives.

*Funeral Liturgy Reflection*  
*Sister Brycelyn Eyler*  
*August 23, 2018*