

Eulogy for Sr. Mary Jude. 2nd August 2021

Sister Mary Jude was born in Addiscombe, 92 years ago. She was educated in our school in Sanderstead and then entered the Daughters of Mary and Joseph in 1950. She made her First Vows three years later – and her Final Vows in 1958.

She began her teaching career in our school in Merrow Grange, Guildford, then was moved to the Prep School in Scarborough for 5 years – then on to the Prep School in Sanderstead for a further 6 years.

She then had a complete change in her work, and was responsible for organizing the catering for both our schools in Sanderstead. Many years later, we reaped the benefit of this here in Thornton Heath where she was a really good cook!

She was then posted to the seaside – down to Herne Bay. There she was the local bursar, and cared really well for many of our elderly Sisters there. She then came up to the West Wickham site and worked in our Care Home – St. Anne's Court.

She had a well-deserved sabbatical in 1982, spending 6 months on a renewal course in Hawkstone Hall.

Back she came to this area, and lived in Shirley Court (in the grounds of Coloma School) for a year where she cared for our sick and elderly Sisters there. Her next move was only minutes away – to our Convent in West Wickham, St. Joseph's where she was bursar, housekeeper, and looked after the elderly Sisters.

Her vocation as a Parish Sister began in 1994, when she was asked to become the Parish Sister in St. Gertrude's Parish, South Croydon. She lived in Addiscombe, and travelled daily to minister to the parishioners there. She loved this work, and was greatly loved by members of this parish. The parish priest from there at that time will be at her Funeral Mass on Wednesday. He spoke so highly of her work there.

Then she came to St. Andrew's, Thornton Heath in September 1998! She loved this parish and was really immersed in it. She was utterly reliable, and such a kind, friendly face at Mass. As a member of the Pastoral Team she was responsible for the Baptismal Programme. Very many of you will remember her dedication to this valuable ministry. She welcomed the parents over to the Convent for their preparation sessions, then had a rehearsal with the group in the Church – then was there for every single baptism. I can tell you our Sunday dinner was really late on those Sundays! She could not be hurried home! We only sat down to eat when the Church was cleared, and tidy, and photos had been taken.

The new Repository was opened here – and this too became the responsibility of Sr. Mary Jude. She spent hours on the ordering and was so reliable in being there every Sunday for the opening of the Repository.

Sister delighted in taking Holy Communion to the housebound too. When she was driving, this was easier for her – but when she had to give up driving, she still continued this ministry as Canon Francis just asked her to visit those who were within walking distance.

At Sunday Mass, Mary Jude always knelt with her friends from the All Abilities Group. She loved each and every one of them and was a valuable member of this group.

Initially she was reluctant to join the Wednesday Club for our “elderly” parishioners – as she did not want to be seen as “elderly” herself. However, she finally decided she would go each week and represent the Pastoral Team.... and she loved it!!! She was always delighted to return home with the bonus of showing us what she had won that day in the raffle!

In April 2013 we had a Mass of Thanksgiving here to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee....ie. 60 years as a Daughter of Mary and Joseph. Bishop Paul came and celebrated with us, and 9 priests concelebrated the Mass. Bishop Tripp was not able to come to the Mass – but did come to the celebration in the Hall afterwards. It was a really happy occasion and Mary Jude really appreciated it.

Sister loved her family – and they loved her too! She loved the regular visits from her nieces and nephews and delighted in the great-nieces and great-nephews. Her family were a great support to her, and she loved each and every one of them.

Mary Jude moved to our Convent in West Wickham in 2016, as she needed more care as her age increased. Her family continued to visit her there – and take her out for meals too, which she loved. They were with her when she finally went to the Lord on Saturday 17th July. They will miss her....as will we, her Sisters in the Congregation. She was gentle, kind, and totally unassuming and uncomplaining. She was a woman of prayer – and I am sure that she will be praying for St. Andrew’s Parish from her place with the Lord whom she loved and served so faithfully for over 70 years. May she rest in peace.

Sr. Sheila Moloney dmj