

## **EULOGY FOR SR. ELLEN MARY CONEFREY, DMJ**

Our Sr. Ellen Mary Conefrey died on September 3, 2024, at Our Lady of the Rosary Convent, Paramount, one month short of her ninety-seventh birthday. Within a short time after her death, we had the beautiful photo of our dear Ellen Mary, a smiling DMJ with her short blue veil and radiant smile. That veil meant a lot to Ellen, a rich symbol throughout her religious life. The photo also speaks to us of Ellen's good humor and warmth, the great characteristics of her long life.

Ellen came to the DMJ's through the influence of her cousin, Anna Mary, who herself had entered with us. So, Ellen entered with us, DMJ's, and after the novitiate in Ballymahon, Co. Longford, she came to California in 1952. There was no doubt in Ellen's mind that this was the life for her. She was a woman committed to a deep religious life and wanted to come close to God.

Ellen's first teaching assignment of religious life was to Morning Star School in San Francisco in 1952. In quick succession she was assigned to schools in the L.A Archdiocese, teaching many grade levels: St. Augustine, Culver City; St. Anthony, El Segundo; St. Louis de Montfort; Santa Maria; Our Lady of the Rosary, Paramount.

With education as the DMJ's primary ministry, our Founder, Constant van Crombrughe, often wrote to our Sisters, encouraging them in his spirit of education. He wrote: *"You will love God through the hearts of those you have taught to love Him."* These words greatly influenced Ellen's manner of teaching. She was imbued with a strong sense of prayer and had the ability to perform tasks with perfection. These characteristics Ellen passed on to the students in her care, both as teacher and as principal, in the classroom and in all the various extra-curricular activities in which she was involved. Ellen finally "retired" from her 60 years in the classroom, but her concern for others remained very active. During her last years in Paramount, Ellen visited the sick, fed the hungry, and ministered to the needy as she took her daily walk.

As we have heard from her niece, Marian, Ellen remained very active with her extensive family, being with them as often as she was able, even to the last days of her earthly life. Ellen often shared news of her family and somehow was able to keep track of each one!

It can be said that Ellen "wrapped" in prayer every aspect of her life. Again, using the words of our Founder, which aptly apply to Ellen: *You are the instruments of the mercy of God. Let no difficulty stand in the way of this ministry."*

Ellen, we rejoice with you as you now experience the fullness of God's love and life! May you rest in peace.

