

*SISTER LAETITIA*

*OF THE ANGELS*

*O'DONOGHUE*



*BORN TO EARTHLY LIFE:  
DECEMBER 6, 1928*

*BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE:  
OCTOBER 6, 2012*

**Sister Laetitia O'Donoghue**  
**Province of U.S.A. & Canada**  
**1928-2012**

When God called Sister Laetitia on October 6, 2012, she had almost completed her 84<sup>th</sup> year and 61 years of profession. At her reception on March 31, 1949, Maire O'Donoghue received the name, Sister Laetitia of the Angels. It was well chosen and was to tell much about her uniqueness. She did "seek after joy and did pursue it" as well as celebrating the Feast of the Angels on Oct. 2. She was energetic, quick in activity, and had multiple interests especially in the arts.

She was born in Ireland on December 6, 1928 into a deeply Christian home and was the eldest of ten children. She took her responsibility of caring for her siblings seriously. They all shared a love of music, literature and the Celtic language. After World War II, Maire went to England to train as a junior student teacher.

From her young years, Sister Laetitia wanted to be a religious and having received guidance from Fr. Paul Knowles, (brother of Sr. Sheila Knowles, SJC) was led to Cluny and entered the Irish novitiate in Ferbane on September 10, 1948. After her Profession, March 8, 1951, Sr. Laetitia was missioned to Wilmington, California, where teaching became the central ministry of her life. In conjunction with this, she taught Catechism on weekends and music in the evenings. She and her students derived much joy from the production of plays and choral programs.

In the classroom, she was conscientious and devoted. No doubt, the influence of her father, a school principal, had set a professional standard for her. Education in its many aspects was prized: she loved literature, history, museums, drama, old mansions and music in all its forms. All her life, she was a learner and a teacher, whether she served in Ss. Peter and Paul School, Wilmington, California; St.

Catherine Laboure School, Torrance, California; Cluny School, Newport, Rhode Island, or elsewhere. Since travel and people held fascination for her, she was ever ready to welcome and to explore, curious and interested about the world and people around her.

The missionary thrust of the Congregation was very dear to her. She loved Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey and endeavored to make her loved. The Bi-Centennial in 2007 was an opportunity to advance the knowledge and mission of Blessed Anne Marie and the Congregation, and she worked diligently for the celebration.

As a strong proponent of freedom and justice she honored each person's autonomy. Because social justice was important to her she fearlessly spoke when necessary both in the convent and outside. Her strong religious principles became evident in controversial situations and discussions.

In 2000 Sister Laetitia came from Newport, Rhode Island to active retirement in St. Stephen Martyr Parish, Monterey Park, California and in 2001 she celebrated her golden jubilee together with four other sisters of her group. In fact, it was a double celebration; it also marked the coming of the Cluny Sisters to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in 1951. The celebration was stellar, and Sister Laetitia rejoiced with gratitude for these fifty years.

Even as she celebrated 50 years of ministry, she continued to move with speed! Slow motion and delays irritated her. It became a joke, that if there was a delay, she would begin walking at high speed anxious to reach her destination. She was equally fast to volunteer in Church-related activities and in city social programs. She was determined, that if she could help, that's where she would be. In these circumstances, of course, she often encountered the marginalized and had a very compassionate ear for their sorrows and burdens. Like the Lord, she was moved by their misery and distress.

2008 saw her health decline. Eventually she was obliged to resign her volunteer ministries. Here her strong faith showed, as she struggled to accept the cross of ill-health. Cognitive impairment in the form of dementia gradually took its toll both in the mental and physical dimensions of her life and for the last three and a half years she lived at, Jeanne Jugan Residence, in San Pedro, California, where she received loving care from the Little Sisters of the Poor and their staff as she became less and less able to communicate or care for herself. On October 6, 2012, she peacefully breathed her last and went home with the angels to paradise 'where life goes on in endless song'. Mass of Resurrection was celebrated on October 11 by her brother, Father Jim O'Donoghue, Interment followed at All Souls Cemetery, Long Beach, California. The joy of the Lord was the strength that sustained her throughout. We pray that as a good and faithful servant she now sings with the angels, Laetitia Domini.