

## Death Notice

### **Sister Helen Mary**

ND 4032

(formerly Sister Mary Nivard)

Helen Louise PETER



Christ the King Province, Chardon, Ohio, USA

Date and Place of Birth:	August 10, 1923	Canton, Ohio
Date and Place of Profession:	August 16, 1945	Cleveland, Ohio
Date and Place of Death:	November 8, 2015	Geauga Hospital, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Funeral:	November 14, 2015	Provincial Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Burial:	November 14, 2015	Resurrection Cemetery, Chardon, Ohio

Helen was the youngest of the four children born to Louis and Mary (nee Leahy) Peter. The family lived in Canton, Ohio, and were members of St. John the Baptist Parish. Helen attended the parish elementary and high school and graduated at 16 as valedictorian of her class of 36 students. She grew up in a religious household with an Irish mother and German father. The family went to Mass often and prayed the rosary daily. Helen remarked of the religious artifacts and photos all over the home, "All those little things that were taken for granted obviously had a big impact on my life."

Helen received a scholarship to Notre Dame College, South Euclid, Ohio, and chose Health and Physical Education as her major field. She had often considered religious life and at the beginning of her junior year, she entered the Sisters of Notre Dame on September 8, 1942. At investment she received the name Sister Mary Nivard, but later returned to her baptismal name, Sister Helen Mary. She continued her studies, graduating with a bachelor's degree in Science and French and a master's degree in Theology from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. Sister also received the Advanced Catechetical Diploma from Notre Dame Institute, Middleburg, Virginia.

The classroom teaching ministry of Sister Helen Mary spanned forty-four years. She ministered at high schools in California and Ohio, teaching biology, religion and French. In 1972 Sister returned to her alma mater, Notre Dame College, where for seventeen years she was Assistant Professor of Theology. Sister once commented, "The charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame is to proclaim the loving providence of God. I feel that I can best do that through teaching and faith formation. I have done both throughout my entire ministry and I don't intend to stop now!"

In 1989, Sister Helen Mary transitioned into parish ministry as Director of Religious Education, Pastoral Minister and Youth Minister in Ohio and Virginia. She loved and respected all to whom she ministered, regardless of age. Sister challenged herself to find just the right method to make Jesus known and loved, whether visiting the homebound or joining activities around a campfire. When she moved to the Provincial Center in 2007, semi-retirement found her serving as assistant receptionist at the local parish school.

Sister Helen Mary treasured each member of her large extended family, her friends and the beauty of all creation. Even in her later years, she never lost her love for sports, especially tennis! Although suffering breathing and heart issues she continued to enrich the lives of others. She was a quiet woman, unassuming and constant, always faithful to the life to which she knew God had called her. With her smile of warm welcome, her gentle manner and her interest and care for others, Sister Helen Mary gave witness to her beloved Jesus who lived within. May she rejoice now in new, eternal life.