

Death Notice

SISTER MARY RITAMAE ND 4533

Dorothy Margaret PRETO



Christ the King Province, Chardon, Ohio, USA

Date and Place of Birth:	April 15, 1933	Newton Falls, Ohio
Date and Place of Profession:	August 16, 1953	Cleveland, Ohio
Date and Place of Death:	November 1, 2016	Health Care Center, Chardon
Date and Place of Funeral:	November 8, 2016	Provincial Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Burial:	November 8, 2016	Resurrection Cemetery, Chardon, Ohio

Born two hours before Easter Sunday, Dorothy was the second of three children in the family of Purcell and Bernice (nee Schiver) Preto. They lived in the small town of Newton Falls and then moved to Warren. When in the fifth grade, Dorothy read an article about orphanages and told her mother she wanted to work there so she could take care of the little children. Her mother responded that usually nuns took care of orphans. Dorothy answered, "Then I'll pray to be a nun." After her freshman year at St. Mary High School in Warren, Dorothy became an aspirant, attending Notre Dame Academy, Cleveland. She entered the community on February 2, 1951, and at investment received the name Sister Mary Ritamae.

Sister Mary Ritamae earned her bachelor's degree from St. John College, Cleveland, and a master's degree in administration and supervision from Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI. Sister ministered as a teacher in intermediate grades for forty-two years. Her ministries took her to schools in the Cleveland and Youngstown Dioceses as well as Washington, DC. Sister Mary Ritamae had an innate sense of what would interest and engage her students. Hers was a students' classroom, guided by a very gifted teacher. Her unique gifts—a listening heart, gentle spirit and twinkling eyes—made everyone she met feel welcomed and accepted.

In 1996 Sister transitioned from classroom teaching to become director of the Before/After School Care Program at St. Louis School in Cleveland Heights. Her creativity, understanding and organizational skills served her well in the ten years of this ministry. Although she never worked in an orphanage, she loved and nurtured the children entrusted to her care.

Sister was a wonderfully supportive and thoughtful community woman who cared deeply about her sisters, always thinking of ways to affirm the gifts she saw in them. Even when she went about "collecting," the items were saved for others, not for herself. Graciousness and kindness characterized her whole life.

When Sister began to experience memory loss, she faced this part of her life's journey with complete trust and surrender. In order to benefit from more specialized care, Sister was a resident at Regina Health Center for five years and then returned to our Chardon Health Care Center in 2015. Her appreciation for and love of nature, especially animals, and her artistic and poetic spirit brought her contentment and peace. Sister Mary Ritamae was a woman who opened her heart to the call to religious life, trusting in God's faithfulness. May she delight in the resting place now found in the arms of her beloved Jesus.