

## Death Notice

**SISTER MARY DEBORAH** ND 4935

Mary Margaret CARLIN

Immaculate Conception Province, USA



Date and Place of Birth:	May 9, 1935	Cleveland, Ohio
Date and Place of Profession:	August 16, 1956	Cleveland, Ohio
Date and Place of Death:	February 6, 2026	Health Care Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Burial:	February 9, 2026	Resurrection Cemetery, Chardon
Date and Place of Memorial Mass:	February 14, 2026	SND Center, Chardon

The birth of Mary Margaret brought both joy and sorrow to Michael and Margaret (Leneghan). Complications from a long labor resulted in the death of Margaret, Mary's birth mother. Her father turned to the Sisters of Charity who cared for his beloved Mary until he married Mary Agnes O'Donnell when Mary was three years old. A second daughter, Kathleen, was born. Mary and Kay, best friends for life, enjoyed a wonderful, simple childhood where Irish culture, education and the Catholic faith were nurtured and cherished. Ever since her first communion, Mary wanted to be a sister. As a freshman in high school, she recognized God's call to the Sisters of Notre Dame. She entered as a postulant on September 8, 1953 and at investment received the name Sister Mary Deborah.

Sister Mary Deborah earned a bachelor's degree in English and history from Notre Dame College of Ohio, a master's degree in English from the University of Minnesota and a master's degree in religious education from the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Studies in Middleburg, Virginia. Being an avid, lifetime student, Sister loved to help others learn. Often called the "traveling nun," she instructed high school students in Ohio, Virginia, California and Florida for more than thirty years.

In 1991 Sister Mary Deborah transitioned from formal classroom teaching into pastoral and educational ministry with children and families at parishes in Florida. This added a new dimension to helping others learn, not only about subject matter, but about our good and provident God. She instructed catechists and initiated retreats, scripture study and sharing for adults in small groups. Children learned to look for God, the giver of all gifts, and to love God and others.

When Sister retired and moved to Chardon in 2012, after fifty-five years in education, she wanted to continue to work with children. At Notre Dame Elementary School, Sister became a primary teacher aide and a tutor, especially for reading. She wrote, "I feel so close to our foundresses who encountered one child at a time, loved deeply and did what was needed at the moment." Later, assisting with hospitality at Bethany Retreat Center was the perfect setting for her beautiful and gentle spirit. She welcomed retreatants, helping them feel at home and ready to experience God in a sacred space.

Sister Mary Deborah was richly blessed with her sisters in community and the unwavering love of her family and many friends. She was deeply grateful to those who supported her, especially during retirement years. Sister radiated a sense of peace through her words and pleasant disposition, and met daily health challenges with a quiet grace and graciousness. She faced this part of her life's journey with trust and surrender. Sister Mary Deborah was a prayerful woman whose gentle spirit and simple manner revealed her love for God and her reverence for others.

We are grateful for her life with us. May she rest in peace.