



## Sr. Claire Louise Sharpshair

BORN: March 1932

ENTERED CONGREGATION: August 30, 1950

DIED: March 30, 2020

**F**or her 60th Jubilee, Sr. Claire Louise wrote, "I learned that worry doesn't empty tomorrow of its suffering, but it empties today of its strength.

Step by step, I began to "let go" of losses, enmeshments, guilt, deaths; just to name a few. I also learned that questions are the most important part of my spiritual journey. Uncertainty is a spiritual gift to help me grow. Questions are life! Live the questions now! Wait for the answers!" On Monday morning, March 30th, Claire Louise entered new life. She is no longer living the questions now but, instead, she is living the answer! Her wait is over. She has found her peace!

On March 1st, 1932, Claire Louise was born Elizabeth Rosemary Philomena Sharpshair in Cincinnati, Ohio, the third child of six, to Walter and Clara Sharpshair. Claire became a helper, caregiver, and hard worker at an early age. When a younger sibling went home to God, Claire Louise did what she needed to do. She helped her family, particularly her grieving mother with many household tasks. She also babysat children in her neighborhood, served food in the school cafeteria, helped clean classrooms, worked in a bakery after school and on Saturdays, and tutored other students. She liked to say she grew up in a "rich" but not necessarily a wealthy environment.

Claire once wrote, "My childhood was filled with love and respect for God, our faith, and God's people of all races and circumstances. The values that my parents not only taught but lived have

been a great influence in my life, my spirituality, and my ministry. They have helped me through the many good and difficult times that we all experience throughout our lives."

As a teenager, Claire felt God's tug in her heart and began to live a new question in life. At the age of 18, Claire Louise officially entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood on August 30, 1950 and became a Postulant. On August 15, 1951, she became a novice and on August 15, 1953 Claire made her First Profession of Vows and received her first call to ministry.

Her life in ministry spanned many years and many undertakings. Claire Louise touched the lives of so many people but, equally important, she wrote, she was touched by many herself. She began in a ministry of teaching with special emphasis on children with learning disabilities. She then served as Vice-Principal and Principal. Subsequently, she became a Youth Leader, Director of Religious Education, Pastoral Associate, Minister to the Dying and Bereaved, Lay Leader, Retreat Presenter, and Missionary in Santiago, Chile working in education, of which she was especially gratified.

Additionally, Claire ministered in African American faith communities in both parish and school contexts. She worked in areas of adult faith formation and spiritual development in these communities. She also served as mentor and presence to everyone, especially the poor and marginalized, migrants, and homeless.

Overall, Claire Louise was a caregiver all her life. Throughout her most recent

journey with physical diminishment, she accepted her limitations with grace and dignity, witnessing to us all how to die with as much quality of life and meaning as she could. She maintained her characteristic humor, in a nod to the presence of her Mother, referring to herself as the "bag lady" just as her Mom had previously called her.

In terms of training for her many ministries, Claire Louise earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Dayton, a Master of Education degree from Xavier University, and a Master of Arts in Religion from the Athenaeum of Ohio. She was a commissioned Lay Minister of the Church in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. In addition, she received numerous Certifications from both the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the Diocese of Cleveland. Of note, Claire Louise also received a Certificate in Biblical Spirituality from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois.

Finally, Claire Louise, as with anyone, had lived through many joys and many struggles. She met these aspects of her life with much love, perseverance, and hard work. She adored her family and loved her C.P.S. Sisters, expressing gratitude for their presence and gift in her life. But most important of all, she loves God and continues to love us all whom she has left behind. She once said that her spirit longs for times of peace and quiet with God. She found that most when she was able to just be with God in nature and with music. Now, we are consoled with the knowledge that she is with God and enjoying the most ultimate and everlasting peace imaginable.

— Sister Marla Gipson