



Claire Irene Gareau

February 25, 2018

Claire Irene Gareau, a cradle Catholic, knew in the third grade she would join the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Entering directly from high school, Claire, then Sister Marie Jean Gareau, SSND, continued her education at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland earning a B.A. in Biology, while teaching seventh grade, and subsequently high school biology. Like many other religious sisters shortly after Vatican II, Claire decided to leave the convent.

In 1970, Claire began a 25-year career with the New York Telephone Company. Even though, she enjoyed each of the positions she held there, in 1995 Claire took an early retirement package, which resulted from the divestiture of AT&T and its operating companies.

It wasn't long before Claire realized full time retirement was not for her. She volunteered for her town's First Aid Squad and found being an EMT very rewarding. Claire also did volunteer work for Habitat for Humanity in Belize. Two part-time jobs followed which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Throughout her adult life, Claire traveled the world extensively with her longtime best friend, Virginia O'Sullivan.

In 2011, Claire decided to return to school full time to study theology, which she had wanted to do in the 1960s. She quickly earned an MA in Theology at Seton Hall University, where she attended many classes with seminarians preparing to serve in the Archdiocese of Newark.

While attending a Call To Action conference, Claire was introduced to Roman Catholic Women Priests (RCWP). When she learned that Mary Ann Schoettly, RCWP, founded an intentional eucharistic community, Sophia Inclusive Catholic Community, about 25 miles from her home, Claire began attending Sunday Mass there. Sophia quickly became Claire's faith community.

After the sudden and unexpected death of its founder in 2014, the members of Sophia asked Claire to consider pursuing ordination through Roman Catholic Women Priests. Claire answered the call of the community. On April 23, 2016, Claire was ordained by Bishop Andrea Johnson, bishop for the Eastern Region of RCWP – USA, at the Church of the Redeemer in Morristown, NJ. Claire served as co-pastor of the Sophia Inclusive

Catholic Community, along with Michael Corso, until her death.

In addition to serving Sophia, Claire, a member of AA for 25 years, found creative ways to minister to those in 12 Step Programs and to those marginalized by the institutional church.

Claire is survived by her sisters, Lucille Keller of Little Egg Harbor, NJ, Pauline Dubois of Paramus, NJ and Anne Marie Phillips of Branson, MO, and many nieces and nephews.

Family and friends are welcome to visit on Sunday 2-6pm at Volk Leber Funeral 789 Teaneck Road, Teaneck. Funeral Service will be on Monday 10am at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 118 Chadwick Road, Teaneck. Private cremation will follow.

Claire's family requests donations in memory of Claire be made either to a charity of your choice or to the Sophia Community [<http://sophiainclusivecatholiccommunity.org/>], care of its Treasurer, Jeanne Nicholls, 4314 Hoover Lane, Wharton, NJ 07885.

Events

MAR **Visitation** 02:00PM - 06:00PM

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Teaneck

789 Teaneck Road, Teaneck, NJ, US, 07666

MAR **Service** 10:00AM - 11:00AM

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St. Mark's Episcopal Church

118 Chadwick Rd., Teaneck, NJ, US

Comments



“ I am so sorry for your loss. Claire was a wonderful person who lit up a room. I worked with Claire at the Teaneck Volunteer Ambulance Corps where she served in many positions, including Squad President. Her dedication was second to none. She was an asset to the organization and we had many great discussions at the building between calls. What a full and interesting life she had. I am sorry I missed the wake.

Anthony Verley - March 05, 2018 at 04:46 PM



“ My condolences to Claire's family.

I was interested to read Claire's obituary in The Record. I was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame at St. John's School in Bergenfield, New Jersey. I presume she attended a school or schools staffed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Which school or schools?

I also once attended a Call for Action conference.

Robert J. Armbruster
Bergenfield

Robert J. Armbruster - March 05, 2018 at 03:39 PM



“ It is with great sadness that I read of Claire's passing. We both worked at NYNEX Enterprises when it was formed in 1983 and Claire filled my position while I was on maternity leave in 1985. She was smart and knowledgeable and well respected by her colleagues. I was pleased to read of Claire's many endeavors after leaving NYNEX and her courage in pursuing her passions. Certainly, she is resting in peace.

MARION COSTANZA - March 03, 2018 at 11:56 AM



“ Johnny & Matt Sullivan purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Claire Irene Gareau.



Johnny & Matt Sullivan - March 03, 2018 at 10:58 AM