

Death Notice

SISTER MARY KAY ND 5913

(formerly Sister Mary Berchmans)

Kay Frances WHITE

Christ the King Province, Chardon, Ohio, USA



Date and Place of Birth:	July 10, 1943	Elyria, Ohio
Date and Place of Profession:	August 16, 1963	Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Death:	August 23, 2016	Palm Beach, Florida
Date and Place of Funeral:	August 30, 2016	Provincial Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Burial:	August 30, 2016	Resurrection Cemetery, Chardon

In her autobiography, Kay described herself as “a little bit of heaven” who was welcomed at birth by her parents, Charles and Mary (McDonnell) White. Throughout life, the strong, lasting family bonds between Kay and her two sisters were a source of energy and life as she held their joys and concerns in her daily prayer. During the second grade at St. Mary Elementary School in Elyria, at the time of her First Holy Communion, Kay first heard the Lord say, “Come, follow Me.” She wrote, “A special little candle was then lit in my soul.” The first step toward her goal to be a religious was to attend Notre Dame Academy, Cleveland, as an aspirant. She then entered the Sisters of Notre Dame on February 2, 1961, and at investment received the name Sister Mary Berchmans. Later she returned to her baptismal name, Kay.

Sister Mary Kay received a bachelor’s degree from St. John College, Cleveland, and a master’s degree from Bowling Green State University, Ohio, both in the area of education. She was dedicated to excellence in Catholic education in her ministry as an elementary school teacher in Ohio, Virginia and Florida for more than thirty years. Sister enjoyed teaching and prepared countless numbers of children for the sacraments. She was totally focused and intent on whatever she was doing—no distractions allowed in her classroom—and the children loved her for it!

The seed for her transition into a new ministry was planted when, as a young girl, she accompanied her mother on visits to local nursing and hospice homes. In 2001, Sister Mary Kay began ministry to the elderly, sick and dying, and to their families. In her visits, she listened to concerns with understanding and compassion. She loved what she was privileged to give, but more importantly, what she received. Sister cherished the bonds of connection that were formed as she journeyed with others through the last stages of life. She felt it was an honor to companion and to be present to those who needed it most.

An additional ministry Sister participated in was that of “telephone ministry.” Living in Florida and being far away from her home in Ohio, this was her opportunity to reach out and to stay connected to her sisters in community and to those she loved. She would walk and talk—many miles, many friends, many acts of concern and kindness.

Two years ago, Sister Mary Kay was diagnosed with cancer. She proceeded with treatments, always with the thought that, through the power of prayer, she would be healed. In the past month her physical condition weakened and she knew death was imminent; but she was not afraid and was at peace. All those she touched each day enriched her life and empowered her to remain faithful to her goal. She wrote, “The spark that I once had in my soul to follow Christ has grown to a burning flame with love for my Bridegroom.” She entered very quietly into the peace and light of God’s presence. May Sister Mary Kay rejoice in eternal life!