

Death Notice

Sister Mary St. Mark

ND 4350

Ruth Lucile FLORENCE



Christ the King Province, Chardon, Ohio, USA

Date and Place of Birth:	February 20, 1927	Cleveland, Ohio
Date and Place of Profession:	August 16, 1948	Cleveland, Ohio
Date and Place of Death:	May 5, 2018	Health Care Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Funeral:	May 11, 2018	Provincial Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Burial:	May 11, 2018	Resurrection Cemetery, Chardon, Ohio

Edward Vance and Lucile (Lamb) Florence rejoiced at the births – only to be saddened by the deaths of their first two children. Needless to say, Ruth's arrival brought great happiness, and she assumed the role of eldest of her two younger siblings. Her father was an architect and her mother was well-known for her involvement in the good works of many charitable organizations. As a child, Ruth was fascinated by airplanes and the thought of flying. In her later years, she delighted in the opportunity to take lessons and did learn to fly a plane! Ruth's simple faith and trust were nurtured by the strong faith of her parents and their devotion to the Blessed Mother. Love of home and family were treasured and sustained throughout life. She had a gift for making everyone she met feel at home in her presence.

After graduating from Villa Maria High School in Pennsylvania, Ruth worked as a receptionist at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron. She reveled in meeting and assisting visitors and her friendly, energetic spirit pointed clearly to her future life and ministry. After a sudden, strong inspiration from the Holy Spirit, Ruth realized her call from God to become a religious. She was impressed with the content of the pamphlets and articles on religious and social issues written by Sister Mary Clare O'Neill, SND, and recognized that Notre Dame was the Congregation where she would find her future home. She entered the community on September 16, 1945 from St. Joseph Parish in Cuyahoga Falls. At investment, Ruth received the name Sister Mary St. Mark.

Sister began her fifteen-year ministry as a primary teacher after two years of study at St. John College, Cleveland. She delighted in the little ones and their families. In 1962, Sister was assigned to the new Provincial Center in Chardon where she became the receptionist and switchboard operator. Here she almost functioned as the heart of the community, being the first to welcome, with gracious hospitality, anyone who walked through the front door. Until 1985, Sister greeted sisters, relatives, friends and visitors with concern, compassion, a big smile and a childlike trust that those who arrived were the presence of Jesus. She showered gifts of love, friendship and prayer on all. She was insightful, detailed and exacting in her work, interested in and attentive to all around her, and able to find the goodness in others. A woman of refinement, graciousness and gratitude, Sister had the ability to make others feel needed and important. Offering hospitality became her characteristic way of being present to God and to others.

In 1986, Sister Mary St. Mark moved to Arlington, Virginia, where she ministered to the elderly at St. Ann Parish, and as a pastoral assistant at Arlington Hospital, visiting patients in all areas, particularly the maternity and pediatric units. In 1995, Sister returned to the Provincial Center and served as part-time receptionist and activities specialist in the Health Care Center. She radiated a sense of peace through her words and pleasant disposition. Even when afflicted by chronic illness and medical crises, she remained the essence of kindness, ever mindful of her dignity as a woman and as a religious. May our good and loving God greet Sister Mary St. Mark with so lavish a welcome that "eye has not seen nor ear heard"!